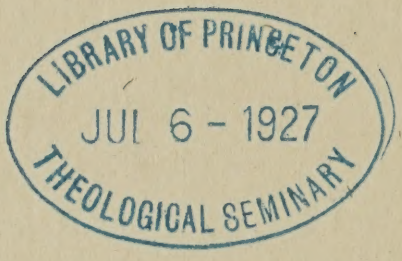
Church Manual

Seventh Day Baptist



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A manual of Seventh Day
Baptist church procedure

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A MANUAL

OF

SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH PROCEDURE

(REVISED)

Compiled and Edited by

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William Lewis Burdick
and
Corliss Fitz Randolph

Preface to Revised Edition

The need of such a manual as this is well attested by the fact that the first edition was out of print in less than a year after publication; and the editors take the opportunity afforded by a second edition to correct a few minor errors, and to extend the treatment of the duties of deacons, as well as that of parliamentary law, and to introduce certain details of description of the manner of administering baptism, and serving the communion, with brief paragraphs on the *Solemnization of Matrimony,* and of the *Burial of the Dead.*

The editors desire to make clear, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, that the entire subject matter of this *Manual* is historical—that it is in short, Seventh Day Baptist history. Indeed, there is no book in existence, to the knowledge of the editors, devoted to the history of the ecclesiastical manners and customs of Seventh Day Baptists, during the three centuries of their existence as a separate denomination of English-speaking Christians, other than this *Manual;* and the editors have sought, with the most exacting and scrupulous care, to introduce nothing into either the first edition or this that is not either of their own personal knowledge, or adequately attested by duly accredited records.

The editors hereby express their thanks for criticisms and suggestions offered—all of which have been given careful consideration in the preparation of this revised edition.

WILLIAM LEWIS BURDICK,
CORLISS FITZ RANDOLPH,
Editorial Committee.

May 1, 1926.

Preface to First Edition

The need of a manual setting forth the forms of procedure commonly followed by Seventh Day Baptist churches has long been recognized. At its annual session, held in Nortonville, Kansas, in August, 1918, the General Conference instructed its Commission to have prepared a manual on the manner of ordaining, deposing, and reïnstating ministers. That was all that was originally contemplated.

At the first subsequent meeting of the Commission, held in the following December, a committee was appointed to undertake this task. But, although work was soon begun, a series of events conspired to delay its completion. Meanwhile the scope of the project was extended from time to time until it finally embraced so much that the committee felt constrained to make the manual as complete as possible for all ordinary church uses; and this has been done, even to the extent of including a brief treatment of parliamentary practice.

However, no effort has been made to produce an exhaustive treatise; for numerous other subjects might easily have been included, and those which have been introduced might have been treated much more extensively. It has been the aim of the committee to treat only those topics that are most likely to arise in the usual routine of church procedure, and to make the treatment

as simple and brief as possible, but sufficiently comprehensive to be complete, however brief.

The numerous delays in the progress of the work have given time for research, study, and consultation that would not have been otherwise possible. Throughout the entire period, the two members of the committee have been in frequent consultation; and, immediately preceding finally going to press, they spent several days in careful consultation, reviewing the entire manuscript.

The committee approached their work with open minds, and with no preconceived ideas except faithfully to follow Seventh Day Baptist precedent. In short, the task of the committee resolved itself into searching out and codifying the practice of Seventh Day Baptist churches since the earliest beginnings of their parent church, the Mill Yard Church, of London, England.

A widely varied personal experience and observation on the part of each of the members of the committee for some forty years and more, and a close study of Seventh Day Baptist history by both for thirty years established a fair working basis for a beginning. Before the close of the work, a careful reëxamination of printed and other documentary sources has been made of every phase of the results submitted.

In so far as possible, the committee has sought to buttress its conclusions by the practice of other denominations whose church government is con-

gregational, like that of Seventh Day Baptists; and have been gratified to find that they all have so much in common. The Baptist procedure has been consulted more than that of any other denomination besides Seventh Day Baptists, but that of the Congregationalists has also been worthy of note. Citations from both have been introduced where they have seemed to illuminate and add force to Seventh Day Baptist practice.

In brief, it has not been the purpose of the committee to set forth their personal views as to the church, its organization, its membership, its government, its discipline, its ministry, its sacraments, its covenants, its beliefs, its constitutions, or its rules of order; but rather to state as clearly as possible the practice of Seventh Day Baptist churches. In so doing, they have kept constantly before them the three hundred years of Seventh Day Baptist history and the struggles of Seventh Day Baptist churches during all this time, along with those of the Baptists and Congregationalists, for religious liberty and for democracy in the church; and the committee has been no less mindful of the development of, and the changes in, the forms and practices of the churches during all these centuries.

WILLIAM LEWIS BURDICK,
CORLISS FITZ RANDOLPH,
Committee.

December 10, 1922.

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Chapter I.

A CHRISTIAN CHURCH

There is need that we keep before us what constitutes an organization as a Christian church. A Christian church may and should be defined from different standpoints:

(a) As to its head, it is an organization centering around Christ, the revelation, manifestation, and personation of God the Father, as its supreme and adorable Lord, Master, Saviour, Guide, Helper, and Friend.

(b) As to the character of its members, it is made up of regenerate baptized believers who are trying to live Christ-like lives and adorn their characters with the graces of Christ.

(c) As to its laws and government, it knows no laws save the laws of Christ as found in the Bible and no government above itself save Christ.

(d) As to its mission, its aim is to lead sinning men, of both high and low degree, to Christ and to lives of righteousness in Christ, to help one another live Godly lives, to better every condition in the world, and above all to make Christ and his blessed will supreme over all.

(e) And as to the sacraments ordained by Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, it is the organization to which Christ, in love, committed these expressive, impressive, precious, and sacred ordinances.

Not a reform association, however good; nor a fraternity, however brotherly; nor a Chris-

tian Association, however active, is a Christian church, for none of them meets the New Testament idea of a church.

Furthermore, an organization calling itself a church may cease to be one because it fails to put first things—Christ and the redemption of men—first; or, worse, because it becomes worldly and selfish.

When a company of people are contemplating organizing a church it is well that they consider whether it is a Christian church or something else they have in mind. Furthermore, it is well that a church already organized test itself occasionally to determine whether its works and spirit entitle it to be called a Christian church.

In this connection, it is not out of place that we call to mind that the term "church" is sometimes used as referring to the Redeemed of all lands, ages, and worlds; but in this MANUAL we have reference to the local, visible organization centering about Christ as all in all, and to the organization,—to which Christ committed the sacraments,—composed of regenerate baptized believers, seeking to help one another, to lead all men to Christ, and to produce a universal brotherhood completely good.

Chapter II.

ORGANIZING A CHURCH

Preliminary Meeting

When there seems to be a sufficient number of Sabbath-keeping Christians in a community to constitute a church, a meeting to consider the question should be called by some one interested in effecting such an organization; or two or more persons may join in calling the meeting. Only those intending to enter the church if organized should be invited unless there be members of other Seventh Day Baptist churches who may be present to advise.

Upon the assembling of the meeting some one who has been instrumental in calling it should call the meeting to order and ask that a chairman be elected. When the chairman has been selected by the vote of those present, a clerk should be chosen. The clerk should record and carefully preserve for future record all actions of the meeting.

Careful Consideration

A chairman and clerk being chosen the meeting is ready to take up the question of founding a church. This question should be very carefully and prayerfully considered. A church should not be organized unless there is a reasonable number

of Sabbath-keepers ready to enter the proposed organization; nor should one be organized where there is not promise of perpetuity and growth.

Possible Decisions

There are four conclusions such a meeting may reach. They are as follows:

(a) It may decide that it is not wise to found a church under existing circumstances.

(b) The meeting may decide to proceed with the organization of a church.

(c) The meeting may, as has often been the case in the past, think wise to form a branch church (a church that is a part of some other church of like faith and practice), and see what the developments are before founding an independent church. This plan has proven its wisdom in many cases.*

(d) The meeting may favour the organization of a church, but think it wise to call a council to advise and assist. This appears to be the course usually followed; and, unless there is good reason for doing otherwise, it is a safe course to pursue.

If it is decided that it is not desirable to organize a church, the meeting is dissolved without further action.

PROCEDURE WITHOUT A COUNCIL

If, however, the meeting decides that it is wise to organize a church, a resolution should be adopted stating that the Sabbath-keeping Chris-

*Such a relation existed, for example, between the First Alfred, N. Y., and the Berlin, N. Y., Churches in the early days of the history of the former.

tians in (here insert name of town or community) believe the time has come to organize a church to be known as the Seventh Day Baptist Church of (here insert the proposed name of the church), and that they proceed to organize one. A committee to prepare a Covenant, Constitution, and Statement of Beliefs (Exposé of Faith) should be appointed. A Committee on Credentials should also be appointed to secure a list of names of those desiring to join the proposed church and to instruct all such to have, so far as possible, their credentials in readiness for a subsequent meeting. These things being accomplished the meeting should adjourn to a day far enough in the future to give the committees opportunity to do their work. In the meantime, those wishing to join the new church and belonging to other churches should secure letters of recommendation and dismissal to join the new church; those belonging to churches of other denominations should secure letters of standing where possible; and if there are candidates for baptism desiring to join, arrangements for their baptism, either before, or in connection with, the next meeting, should be made.

Organization Meeting

When the meeting reässembles and a chairman and clerk have been selected, a Covenant, Constitution, and Statement of Beliefs* should be

*See Chapter V.

presented by the committee appointed for this purpose and adopted with such amendments as those intending to join the church shall deem wise. The Committee on Credentials should report a list of those whom they judge to be proper candidates. Those holding acceptable letters of recommendation and dismissal from other churches of like faith and practice should be received by virtue of these credentials; those who have been members of other churches, Seventh Day Baptist or otherwise, but for good reasons are unable to present any written credentials, should be received upon an acceptable statement of their Christian experience and baptism; and those recently baptized should be received upon an acceptable confession of faith and of baptism.

Branch Church

If the meeting of Sabbath-keeping Christians decide it is best to organize themselves as a branch of some other church, they may proceed as in the organization of an independent church, described above, and when the organization is completed ask some church of like faith to receive them as a branch. It might be better, as has sometimes been done, for them to ask the church of which they wish to become a branch to lead in the organization. It is expected that a branch church will in time grow sufficiently to become an independent church; in the meantime it receives the fostering care of the older and stronger body

of disciples. It should direct its own affairs and keep its own records, receiving such help and advice as may be needed from the church of which it is a part.

PROCEDURE WITH A COUNCIL

If the meeting look with favour upon the founding of a church but desire the advice and help of Seventh Day Baptist churches, a council may be called. The procedure in this case would be for the meeting to vote to call a council of Seventh Day Baptist churches in that section, fix the date for the meeting of the council and appoint a committee to send out the invitations. The following is a form of invitation:

Hope Valley, N. J., Oct. 15, 1923.

Shiloh Seventh Day Baptist Church,
Shiloh, N. J.

DEAR BRETHREN:

The Sabbath-keeping Christians of Hope Valley, N. J., are contemplating organizing themselves into a Seventh Day Baptist church and are asking for a council to advise and assist them. You are requested to send your pastor, deacons, and other delegates to meet with delegates from other churches in Hope Valley, N. J., at 10 o'clock, November 20, 1923.

BURDICK CRANDALL,
Chairman.

Before the meeting of the council, those desiring to enter the proposed church should secure their church letters so far as possible and make

all necessary arrangements for the meeting of the council. It is well to have a committee appointed for this purpose.

When the council meets, the clerk of the previous meeting should call the council to order, read the action requesting a council and state its purpose, ask for a list of delegates with their credentials, and call for the election of a chairman, who, when elected, shall take the chair and see that a clerk is chosen.

The council thus organized passes upon the credentials of its members, and then proceeds to the consideration of the question of founding a church and finally expresses its decision in the form of a vote taken, or resolution passed.

If the council decides to organize a church, it proceeds to do so by calling for a list of those desiring to enter the proposed church with their credentials. It may be advisable for the council to appoint a Committee on Credentials and wait for its investigation and reports. Each candidate should be passed on separately. When this is done, a Covenant, Constitution, and Statement of Beliefs should be presented to those who have entered the new organization for their adoption. The newly formed church is then ready to elect its officers and begin its life and work.

The proceedings of this meeting together with those of all the preliminary meetings should be recorded in the record book of the church.

When the immersed Sabbath-keepers have

formed themselves into a church, they should complete the organization by electing officers and establishing public worship on the Sabbath, prayer meetings, Bible Schools, and all needful church appointments.

BECOMING A MEMBER OF AN ASSOCIATION AND OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

When a Seventh Day Baptist church is organized, it is customary for it to connect itself with the General Conference and the Association in whose territory the church is located.

The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference is composed of all the churches of like faith and practice in the United States and elsewhere in the world, and its purpose is to unite them all for mutual help and for the accomplishment of the ends for which they exist, while the Associations include Seventh Day Baptist churches of a given section so situated that they may all meet at least annually for mutual encouragement.

Neither an Association nor the General Conference has any authority over a church. All that either assumes to do, or has power to do, is to advise.

The method of becoming a member of the General Conference and an Association is practically the same in each case. The church desiring membership should present a written application for membership, together with its Covenant

and its Articles of Faith. If these are found acceptable, the church is received into the larger body upon vote of the latter.

While neither the General Conference nor an Association has any authority over a church, a church may be excluded from either, upon vote, and for reasons sufficient and satisfactory to the larger body. It is fitting that a church should be dropped from either the General Conference or an Association, or both, if it cease to be in conformity with the other component churches as to belief and practice. A church may withdraw from the General Conference, or from the Association to which it belongs.

DISBANDING A CHURCH

When it becomes apparent that a church has accomplished its mission, or that for any reason it can no longer maintain its existence, it should take steps to dispose of its property and disband; otherwise it will merely drift out of existence, its property go into disinterested or unworthy hands, and bring disgrace upon the cause it represents. There should be as much care and order taken in dissolving a church as in forming one. The question as to the wisdom of continuing or disbanding should not be thoughtlessly decided; nor should it be allowed to be settled through indolence and procrastination. In some cases a council to help decide the question may well be called.

When it is decided that it is no longer wise to

maintain a church, the first step is to vote to "disband after the property is disposed of and other matters settled."

Disposal of Property

The trustees should then be instructed to settle all business matters and dispose of the property according to the wishes of the church, and the church should maintain at least a legal existence till this is done. All churches should have careful inquiry made as to their legal status in the states in which they are respectively situated, and especially with reference to property of extinct churches.

Letters to Members

When the business affairs are settled, the church should pass a resolution instructing the clerk to grant letters of recommendation to all members in good standing. The trustees having settled the financial affairs and the members having been given letters of recommendation by the clerk, the work of disbanding may be considered completed in a creditable manner. But it is not creditable to let a church drift out of existence and permit its property and members to go wherever they may.

Disposal of Records

Before a church disbands it should take proper action for the safe keeping and disposal of its records. They are very valuable as historical documents and it is a serious mistake to disre-

gard them, and allow them to be destroyed or lost. Now that the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society has been founded, the most natural disposition to make of church records is to place them in its hands for preservation.

Final Action

When all business has been duly transacted, the final vote should be that "the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J., do now disband."

Chapter III.

CHURCH INDEPENDENCE AND MUTUAL CO-OPERATION

It is evident that in New Testament days the baptized believers in a community constituted a church and that each church was independent of every other organization, civil and religious, as to the management of its own affairs. To this policy Seventh Day Baptist churches have always held. Doubtless there have been individual Seventh Day Baptists who were inclined to a Presbyterian or Episcopal form of polity, but Seventh Day Baptists as a body have strenuously insisted that Christ was their sole head, their Lord and Master; and have guardedly refused to bow to any other authority or allow it to hamper them. They have insisted that for any earthly power to dictate to a church of Christ is for that power to usurp the place of Christ; and that the freedom of a church should be limited only by the rights of the individual, and by the laws of civil governments when not contradictory to the laws of Christ.

They have gone farther than this, and interpreted the New Testament as teaching the freedom of the individual to approach God through Christ directly, to interpret the Scriptures for himself, to formulate his own beliefs, and to

worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Seventh Day Baptists have no creedal statements to which their members must adhere, and their covenants are most simple. A very wide range of beliefs prevails among them. The Bible with its Christ, faith and repentance, forgiveness of sins, baptism by immersion, the Sabbath of Christ, Godly living, the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of all men, is the only creed they recognize.

This independence of church and individual does not prevent coöperation in work that belongs to them all—missions, Bible study, evangelism, publication of literature, and education. At an early day, 1684, they established the "yearly" and "general" meetings for worship and consultation. Out of these grew the General Conference and the Associations. During the last century they found means of effective coöperation in education through the Seventh Day Baptist Education Society; in publication and Sabbath reform through the American Sabbath Tract Society; in Bible study through the Sabbath School Board of the General Conference; in enlisting the women in denominational work through the Woman's Board of the General Conference; and in missions, evangelism, and all that pertains to missions, through the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society. This New Testament independence doubtless has its weaknesses, like all things human; but it also has its strength, as

demonstrated in the history of Seventh Day Baptists, and of all Baptists. There is no warrant in the New Testament, and no need in practical experience, for a central power to give instructions to the local churches and to individual disciples; there are ways besides commands based on authority by which great achievements may be brought about. "God loves the cheerful giver," and he does not want things done because some human authority has commanded them. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The trend of human institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, justifies our Saviour in establishing an order in which every individual in His kingdom is a priest unto God, and the local church a democracy; none subject to any one save Christ himself.

Chapter IV.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The question as to who may become members of a church is one that is under constant discussion. According to the New Testament there are four indispensable pre-requisites; namely, regeneration, confession of purpose to follow Christ, Baptism, and Christian living.

REGENERATION

That one should have a change of heart before being admitted to the body of the holy Christ, the church, is taught very plainly in the New Testament. Any tendency to admit individuals without sufficient evidence of regeneration is to be deplored and should not be tolerated. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate," is the New Testament admonition.

This is not saying that every one must have an experience like Paul's on the Damascene way, or like that of any one else. Neither can it be maintained that every one who has met a change of heart will remember the time when it took place; the change may come gradually like the dawn of the morning light, or suddenly like the bursting of the sun from behind a fast flying cloud. It may come in the first hours of self-consciousness when the soul is tender and responsive to the touch of God and man, or any time

thereafter till the flame of life has burned out; but before any one is qualified to become a member of the body of Christ, he should have experienced a religious awakening wherein he has chosen to follow Christ and His righteousness. This was the class of members received on the day of Pentecost, and throughout New Testament history; and Seventh Day Baptists have always maintained that a regenerate heart is one of the indispensable conditions for membership in the church of Christ.

A PUBLIC PROFESSION

It is fitting and consistent with the teachings of the New Testament that one desiring to unite in fellowship with Christ's disciples should make a public profession of his faith in Christ as his Saviour, and of his determination to follow Him throughout the remainder of his life. If one does not make a public profession of such faith, how is the church to know that he is endeavouring to follow Christ, and that he desires to come into church fellowship? One needs to make a public profession of his stand for Christ for his own strengthening; it commits him to, and establishes him in, his new faith as only few things can. Also, one needs to make a public profession of Christ for the sake of others. One of the chief means ordained of God to Christianize the world is proclaiming to the world on the part of Christ's disciples what He has done for them. It is well

that candidates for church membership tell the pastor, deacons, or prudential (or advisory) committee their experiences; but they should also come before the church and speak for themselves. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." There may be cases where candidates may not be able to come into the public congregation and make a public avowal of their decision; but in all such cases they should be received without it, if otherwise acceptable. However, other things being equal, when one is not willing to confess his Lord and Master who died for him, there is reason to question his sincerity and fitness for church fellowship, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory."

BAPTISM

Baptism is a public confession of faith in Christ, his death, and resurrection; and the avowal of the candidate's putting away of sin, and of his purpose to lead a Christian life; it puts a seal upon his vows and promises to follow Christ; and it was instituted and ordained by the Master himself as a special form of public profession of such faith and vows. The New Testament order was marked out on the day of Pentecost; they repented, they were baptized, and they joined the church. Christ indicated the same

order when he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

People have often desired church fellowship without baptism, but Seventh Day Baptists have uniformly followed the New Testament order, maintaining that one who was not willing to follow his Lord in baptism had not yet committed himself to full obedience.

A LIFE IN HARMONY WITH CHRIST'S EXAMPLE AND TEACHING

There is no New Testament sanction for asking one who has penitently turned to Christ to wait a certain length of time before baptism and church membership, or, in other words, to put him on probation; but, in most cases, a few days elapse between one's public profession and his reception into the church upon baptism. It may be only a few days, but the conduct of those days, be they few or many, should give evidence of sincerity of intention and steadfastness of purpose, or church fellowship should not be granted. Dr. Edward T. Hiscox well says on this point, "Those pastors make a grave mistake and are grievously at fault who hurry persons into the church without giving the body a fair and full opportunity of gaining evidence of their regenerate state. . . . . The church may seem prosperous, because baptisms frequently occur; but the moral strength of the church is weakened, rather, and disorder introduced where order should prevail."

It is better, however, to err in admitting doubtful cases, than in shutting out one sincere, struggling, tempted, and tried soul.

THE SABBATH

In this connection, it should be noted that while coöperating in Christian activities and all good works with those who do not observe the Sabbath of the Bible, Seventh Day Baptists receive into membership only those Baptists who keep the Sabbath of Christ and the Apostles. In doing this, they have always treated with utmost courtesy those who do not agree with them in belief and practice, and they have always endeavoured to serve all individuals and all worthy community interests; but they hold that Sabbath observance is essential to Christian living and object to the substitution of a man-made day for the Bible Sabbath in the same way that they object to any substitution for baptism by immersion.

MODE OF RECEPTION

Seventh Day Baptist churches receive members only upon the vote of the church at some regular, or specially called, meeting; and it is a written rule in some churches that "no member shall be hastily received into the church to the grief of any member thereof." Some churches provide a board or committee before whom candidates for membership appear prior to admission, and upon whose recommendation they are received. If no

SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOPE VALLEY, N. J.

(LETTER OF DISMISSAL)

August 31, 1922

Name BURDICK GREENE

**Joined* JEFFERSON CENTRE, WIS., CHURCH

Date notice was received September 25, 1922

Notice signed by STILLMAN DAVIS, Clerk of Jefferson Centre, Wis., Church.

*Note.—This and the two following entries on this page are made after receipt of notice that BURDICK GREENE has joined the Jefferson Centre, Wis., Church.

such committee is provided, a wise pastor will make it a rule to consult his deacons before presenting candidates for membership. Whatever may be done in these ways to safeguard the church, however, the final and decisive action is the vote of the church.

When we turn to the details there are three modes of receiving members, depending upon the candidate. The three modes are (1) By Baptism, (2) By Letter, and (3) Upon Experience.

Reception by Baptism

If a candidate has not been immersed it is the usual custom for him to come before the church, make a statement of his Christian experience, and request baptism and church membership. A candidate is sometimes admitted to baptism by the pastor before he presents him to any church or any committee on candidates. There is nothing illogical about this, much less unscriptural, and there are situations where this course is preferable.

If there is a committee for the purpose, the pastor brings the candidate for membership before the committee either before or after baptism. The committee, after hearing the candidate's experience and request for membership, passes upon the latter and recommends him for fellowship in the church if deemed fit. The candidate is then presented to the church, before which he states his experience and to which he makes his request, and the church votes on the question of

his reception. If he has been immersed, the question to be voted upon is that he be received into fellowship; but if he has not been immersed, it is that he be admitted to church membership upon immersion.

It is customary that the pastor lead in these matters, but it should not be left to him alone; every member should be on the watch for those ready for baptism and church membership; he should do more than this, he should constantly seek to lead men to that state of mind and heart wherein they are ready for, and want, baptism and fellowship with the followers of Christ.

Reception by Letter

A member of another church of like faith and practice may come into the church by a letter of recommendation and dismissal from the church of which he is a member. The candidate presents his letter and request for membership to the pastor, who presents the matter to the church for consideration. If a committee on candidates exists, the letter and request are presented in turn, to that committee for consideration and recommendation prior to being presented to the church. It is not customary, however, for the candidate to give his experience before either the committee or church, his letter of recommendation being accepted as sufficient evidence regarding his Christian experience.

It is understood that the church receiving a

member by letter shall notify the church from which he came when he is received. This is a practice which knows no exception except in case of gross negligence. A blank form of letter of recommendation to which is attached a blank form of notice that the member has joined another church may be obtained from the publishing house of the American Sabbath Tract Society in Plainfield, N. J.

The following form of a letter of dismissal was adopted by the General Conference, at its annual session, at North Loup, Nebraska, August, 1923, upon the recommendation of a committee which had had the question under serious consideration for a year.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION AND DISMISSAL

SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH
OF HOPE VALLEY, N. J.

August 31, 1922.

This is to Certify, That BURDICK GREENE is a member in full and regular standing of the SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOPE VALLEY, N. J., and as such is recommended for membership in any other church of like faith and order.

DAVIS CRANDALL,
Church Clerk.

The individual to whom this letter is issued will be regarded as a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J., subject to its rules of government, until due notice is received by the clerk of that church of the reception of the former into some other church.

N. B.—The accompanying blank will be detached by the clerk of the church to which this letter is presented, and filled out and forwarded to the clerk of the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J.

LETTER OF NOTIFICATION

September 23, 1922.

To The Clerk of The Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J.:

This is to Certify, That on September 22, 1922,

BURDICK GREENE

was received into full and regular standing as a member of the

JEFFERSON CENTRE, WIS.

Seventh Day Baptist Church.

(Signed) STILLMAN DAVIS,
Clerk of the Jefferson Centre, Wis., Church.

After the foregoing has been filled out, please forward to Davis Crandall,
Hope Valley, N. J.

Note: A facsimile form is inserted here showing a convenient form in which letters of dismissal may be printed and bound into book-form. It will be observed that this form is provided with a stub, somewhat like a check book, on which may very conveniently be entered all the information necessary when the letter is issued, and when notice is received that the individual has joined another church. These blanks (printed with the name of the church issuing them, if desired) may be obtained in book-form from the American Sabbath Tract Society, Plainfield, N. J.

Reception by Experience

A Sabbath-keeping Christian who has been immersed sometime in the past, but for some reason has lost his membership or who has never been a member of a church, may be received upon experience. If there is no committee on candidates, he gives his Christian experience to the church and requests membership; thereupon the church passes upon the question of his admission. If there is a committee on candidates, he first

presents his request and gives his experience to it, which in turn recommends him to the church if deemed worthy. The church upon hearing this request and Christian experience, pass upon the question of his admission in the light of the recommendation of the committee.

THE RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP AND THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

In some churches members coming for the first time into church fellowship are received by the laying on of hands and extending the right-hand of fellowship; while in some other churches the right-hand of fellowship is extended to all members upon their reception. These forms, though impressive and helpful, are not deemed essential to church membership, and an immersed believer who has been voted into the church, is a member, entitled to all the privileges of a member, without the laying on of hands and without the right-hand of fellowship.

RECEPTION WHEN ABSENT

It is customary for a candidate to attend the session at which he is voted into the church; but this is not essential, and is not required when there is a sufficient reason for his absence.

DISMISSAL

In the past, Seventh Day Baptist churches have recognized only three methods of dismissal; namely, (1) By Letter, (2) By Death, and (3)

By Exclusion. But in recent years, there is a growing practice of dropping the names of those whose residence can not be obtained; and some churches drop the names of members who urgently request it.

Dismissal by Letter

When a person wishes to be dismissed by letter he should make application in writing. It is the rule in some churches that the clerk may grant letters to those requesting them if they are in good standing; but in most cases it is customary that such requests come before the church and be passed upon by it before the clerk issues the letter of dismissal.

Death

When a member passes away, the clerk should mark his name on the church roll with a star (*) to denote his decease, carefully recording the date of his departure to the church triumphant. This is due both the church and the departed; due the church that those no longer living be not counted, and due the departed that at least a minute of his death be made.

Excommunication

Excommunication is not so common a mode of dismissal now as in former days; but when it takes place, the excluded one, of course, ceases to be a member.

Dropping Names

The practice of dropping names has much to commend it under certain circumstances, and doubtless will be used much more often in days to come than in the past. It is coming to be the course resorted to in dealing with those of whom the church can find no trace and those who have become dissatisfied and insist on being released. When a person persistently insists on withdrawing from the church and all entreaties on the part of his brethren are unavailing, perhaps it is better to grant his request and drop his name than to continue the irritation caused by holding him in nominal fellowship; but such request should not be granted till every resource has been exhausted to remove the dissatisfaction, and until the danger point has been reached. Furthermore it is better that the names of those whose whereabouts have long been unknown be dropped than that the church should hold and report names that are lost to the church and dead to the cause. Names that have been dropped should be placed in a list by themselves kept for that purpose; but should not be included in reports to the Association or to the General Conference, and if they should desire to reünite, they may be reïnstated by vote of the church.

For members whose whereabouts have long been unknown, the action may be about as follows:

Whereas, Brother Ward Bliss has long absented himself from this church and its activities, and his

whereabouts at the present time are unknown, therefore,

Resolved, That Brother Bliss's name be dropped from the roll of active members of this church, and placed on its inactive roll instead, in the hope that he may yet return to his former position of activity in the church.

For members who have stated that they are no longer in sympathy with the faith and practice of the church, the action may be as follows:

Whereas, Brother Ward Bliss has expressed himself as no longer in sympathy with the faith and practice of this church, and requests that his name be dropped from the rolls of the church; therefore,

Resolved, That Brother Bliss's request be complied with, and that his name be dropped, and placed on the roll of inactive members of the church in the hope that he may yet return to full sympathy and accord with the church.

REINSTATING

An excluded member who has shown penitence for his offense and resumed a worthy Christian life may be reïnstated upon his request, by the vote of the church. It is not considered Christian courtesy for a church to receive one who has been excluded from a sister church till he has been reïnstated, or till the church which excluded him has expressed its approval of the former member joining the other church except where it has been proven that the church was wrong in its act of exclusion. If a church has not had just reasons for its discipline or has in any way treated

a member wrongfully, it should acknowledge its wrong and do everything possible to amend the injury done.

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

It is the duty of every member to be true to his baptismal vows and promises and to all his covenant obligations; to abandon every form of sin and appearance of evil; to make his business and social practices conform to the rule and spirit of Christ; to lead a life of prayer and devotion; faithfully to study the Word of God that he may know how he should conduct his private and public life; to help maintain public worship and help to bear the financial burdens of the church and kingdom of God on earth; to exercise Christian courtesy, charity, and forbearance toward all in spirit and conduct; and constantly to find, so far as possible, some definite work for Christ and the children of men.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGE OF MEMBERS

While it is the privilege of every regenerate person to enjoy the spiritual glow of sins forgiven through Christ and the favour of God upon his daily walk, the sustaining strength of the Saviour for hourly needs, the satisfaction of an approving conscience, and the fellowship of godly people, it is the especial privilege of every member of the visible church to participate in its worship and all its social, business, and religious

meetings; to hold such offices as his brethren from time to time shall assign him; freely to enter into the discussion of all questions coming before the church and to vote on all motions; to have a voice in the election of pastor, deacons, and other officers; and to share equally with other members in determining the policies of the church, always bearing in mind that majority rule should prevail and "that God is no respecter of persons."

Chapter V.

COVENANT AND EXPOSE OF FAITH

COVENANT

The covenants usually adopted by Seventh Day Baptist churches are very brief and simple, but comprehensive. Two forms are given below and are those adopted by two Seventh Day Baptist churches, but every church decides for itself what its covenant shall be.

Form 1

COVENANT

Art. 1. We agree to keep the commandments of God, and walk in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Art. 2. To accept the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice.

Art. 3. To watch over each other for good, to the intent that we may build up together in Christ, grow in grace and a further knowledge of truth, and be instrumental in bringing men to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Art. 4. To faithfully attend the appointments, and bear the burdens and expenses of the church, according as God may give us severally the ability.

Form 2

COVENANT

Having been, as we trust, brought by Divine grace into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour from sin, we solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another:

To take the Bible as a "lamp to our feet and a light to our path," giving special heed to the Law of God, as expounded by our Saviour in His Sermon on the Mount.

To maintain the public worship of God, and the ordinances of His house.

To exercise a Christian watchfulness over one another.

To walk together in Christ whose we are and whom we profess to serve, in brotherly love.

To give, as a voluntary and cheerful offering to the Lord, and according to our ability, towards meeting the necessary expenses of the church, for the benefit of the poor, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world.

To try by precept and example, in all our family, social, and business relations, and everywhere, to maintain a Godly walk and conversation, through obedience to the requirements of the gospel.

EXPOSE OF FAITH

For one hundred and sixty years after the organization of their first church in America, Seventh Day Baptists set forth no statement of their beliefs; they studiously avoided doing anything of the kind. They guarded their freedom of conscience so carefully that they would not lay down a statement of beliefs for anyone. If a man was penitent for his sins, accepted Christ as his Saviour and guide, was immersed in water, kept the Sabbath of Christ and took the Bible as his rule of faith, nothing more was asked of him. The way they felt about it is set forth by Eld. Henry Clark in his *History of Seventh Day*

Baptists in America, published in 1811. He says:

"As this denomination universally hold the Bible to contain God's holy will revealed to man, wherein are exhibited the object of faith and the rules of life; ..... and as the Bible is explicit to direct in every station of life, the duty we owe to God, ourselves and our fellow-mortals—so they generally esteem any prescription of man, in these latter ages of the world, as to rules of faith and morals, not only useless but nearly presumptuous. And notwithstanding they are harmoniously agreed in the important, fundamental and essential points of the Christian Religion; yet as to smaller matters and mere circumstantial points there may be a great variety of sentiments."

As new churches were formed there came to be an increasing demand for a statement of the beliefs of Seventh Day Baptists, not that it should be a yoke of bondage, but that it might show to the world the excellency of the Gospel as taught by them and be a guide to those desiring to found Seventh Day Baptist churches. Consequently at the annual session of the General Conference in 1831 a committee was appointed to draft an exposé of faith. The report of this committee was received and placed on file in 1833; and, two years later, it was adopted as substantially what Seventh Day Baptists believed.

In 1852 the question of an exposé of faith was again considered in the General Conference and certain amendments were ordered to the exposé of 1833.

Following this action, the General Conference passed a significant resolution of explanation, which says:

"RESOLVED, That this exposé is not adopted as having any binding force in itself, but simply as an exhibition of the views held by the denomination."

In 1880, the General Conference adopted a new statement of beliefs as follows:

I. OF GOD

We believe in one God, self-existent, infinite in wisdom, power, justice, and goodness; the Creator and Governor of all things. *Deut.* 33:27; *Psa.* 90:2; *Isa.* 44:6; *I Tim.* 1:17.

II. OF CHRIST

We believe that Christ possessed both a divine and a human nature, and was therefore both the Son of God and the Son of Man. *Matt.* 1:1; *Psa.* 2:7; *Luke* 1:35; *Rom.* 1:3, 4; *Gal.* 4:4; *II Cor.* 5:19; *John* 1:1.

III. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, whose office was to inspire the prophets and apostles, as the instructors of men, with a knowledge of the mind of God, and who is the regenerator and sanctifier of men through the truth. *John* 14:26; *II Peter* 1:21; *Acts* 2:4, 5; *John* 3:5; *Rom.* 8:2; *Gal.* 5:22.

IV. OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that they are a perfect rule of faith and practice. *Heb.* 1:1; *II Peter* 1:21; *II Tim.* 3:16, 17; *I Cor.* 2:12, 13.

V. OF MAN

We believe that man possesses a two-fold nature—physical and spiritual; that he was created holy, but that by transgression he fell, and so came under condemnation; that in order to be saved he must be born again, and that this salvation is the gift of God. *II Cor.* 4:16; *Rom.* 7:22; *Eph.* 3:16; *Col.* 3:10; *I Peter* 3:4; *Gen.* 1:26; 3:6-19; *Rom.* 5:12; *John* 3:3, 5, 7; *Eph.* 2:5; *Rom.* 3:24, 25; 4:16; *Eph.* 2:8.

VI. OF HEIRSHIP AND ETERNAL LIFE

We believe when one is constituted a child of God, he becomes an heir of eternal life. *Acts* 26:17, 18; *Rom.* 8:14-18; *Gal.* 3:29; 4:7.

VII. OF REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND BAPTISM

We believe it to be the duty of all men to repent, believe in Christ the Saviour, and to be baptized. *Matt.* 28:19; *Luke* 24:47; *Acts* 2:38, 41; 8:12; 10:47; 16:15, 33; 18:6; *Mark* 16:16; *Rom.* 6:4; *Col.* 2:12.

VIII. OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Lord's Supper an ordinance of religion, to be perpetuated in the church. *Matt.* 26:26; *I Cor.* 11:23-26.

IX. OF THE SABBATH

We believe the seventh day [of the week] to be the Sabbath of Jehovah, and that it should be kept holy as a memorial of creation and as a type of the saints' rest in heaven. *Gen.* 2:2, 3; *Exod.* 20:8-11; *Heb.* 4:1-11.

X. OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT

We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; that the righteous will

be everlastingly justified, and the wicked everlastingly condemned. *Dan.* 12:2; *Acts* 24:15; 17:31; *Matt.* 25:46; *John* 5:28, 29; *Rom.* 2:7; *II Thess.* 1:9, 10.

XI. OF THE RESURRECTION-BODY OF THE SAINTS

We believe the saints will be raised with spiritual, incorruptible bodies. *I Cor.* 15:35-54.

There have been various statements of what Seventh Day Baptists believe, by individuals, churches, and delegated bodies, such as the report of the Committee on the World's Faith and Order Movement presented to the General Conference in 1917 and a resolution adopted by the General Conference at its annual session in 1886, declaring that it is the general belief of Seventh Day Baptists that Christ "will certainly come again"; and "that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"; but none of them has any binding force over any church or individual, and none of them is satisfactory to every one.

Seventh Day Baptists have no creed save the Bible, and no creedal test save a regenerate heart, Baptism, the Sabbath, and a Christian life.

Chapter VI.

COMMUNION SERVICE

EMBLEMS

The practice regarding emblems used in the communion service has varied somewhat, especially in recent years. Formerly, fermented wine and unleavened bread both, only, were used. But more recently, conforming to the growing sentiment against the use of fermented wine as a beverage, the use of unfermented grape juice has grown in favour. There seems to be no reasonable objection to the latter practice, as the unfermented juice of the grape is none the less the "fruit of the vine." The Jews continue, however, to use fermented wine in celebrating the Feast of the Passover, pursuant to the ancient Biblical custom.

The use of leavened bread is a radical departure from the Biblical custom, as well as from its spirit. Unleavened bread* may easily be pre-

*Note.—The original Passover bread was doubtless made of coarse unbolted entire wheat flour just as it came from a primitive small hand mill on which it was ground, mixed hastily with no other ingredient than merely sufficient cold water to make a coarse thick dough which, in turn, was made into small thin cakes and quickly baked in hot ashes covered with red hot coals, after the fashion of the present day Bedouins of the Eastern deserts. Modern American Jews use what are called "matzoths," made by commercial manufacturers for their Passover feast.

One of our older churches, for generations, has used, and still uses, bread made similar in appearance to pie crust mixed quickly with sour cream (or sour milk with egg

(*Continued at bottom of Page* 46)

pared, with a little experience; and there seems to be no good reason why it should not be used.

Common vs. Individual Cups

The ancient custom, continued until recent years, was to use one common cup for the entire congregation; and, with small congregations, there was little inconvenience. As congregations grew larger, however, two or more cups were used as a matter of convenience; until, in conformity with modern sanitary laws, individual cups, of silver, aluminum, or glass, are now quite commonly used. There seems to be no reasonable objection to this more modern custom, and there is much to commend it.

The care of the various utensils, including the linen belonging to the sacramental table, is usually entrusted to one of the deacons who is likewise made responsible for providing the emblems.

Manner of Serving

The deacons usually make the table ready for the communion service, first covering it with a suitable white linen cloth provided for the purpose. Upon the table is then placed the bread and wine with the utensils for serving them, and

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beaten into it). After the dough is rolled very thin and placed into pie tins, it is scored deeply with a sharp knife into small squares, convenient for breaking. It is kept cold as possible until it is put into the oven ready for baking. After baking, it is removed from the tin without breaking, if possible, and placed in this form on a suitable plate, or paten, on the communion table ready for breaking by the officiating clergyman.

the whole covered with another white linen cloth. At the appropriate moment of the service, a deacon uncovers the bread and the patens (or plates) for containing it. After the bread is served, a deacon replaces it with the wine, with the cup or cups, and carefully covers the remaining remnants of bread.

In serving, the members of the congregation remain seated in their pews, while the emblems are served to them first. The minister or ministers are then served by one of the deacons, who then serves the other deacons. He, himself, is then served by the one whom he last serves. This is one of the forms used on such occasions; but there are other forms, variations of this.

How Often Celebrated

Probably the majority of our churches celebrate the communion service once in two or three months in connection with the usual Sabbath morning service. The Mill Yard Church, of London, the original Seventh Day Baptist Church, celebrates it but once a year, at the time of the Passover, of the Jewish Church. In some Baptist, as well as other Protestant churches, it is celebrated every week.

Chapter VII.

BAPTISM

Manner and Place

Seventh Day Baptists, like all other Baptists, practice baptism by immersion, and recognize no other form, since that was the manner in which Jesus, the Christ, was baptized. Baptism may be made in a flowing stream, or lake, or other suitable natural or artificial body of water. The modern practice, especially in city churches, of providing a baptistry in the church itself is much in use, and is convenient. Our oldest church, the Mill Yard Church, of London, has on occasion, resorted to a pool in a public bath.

Baptismal Robes

Conforming to St. Paul's injunction that "All things be done decently and in order," several of our churches have provided black, loose-fitting robes for the minister and the candidates, both men and women (white robes are occasionally used for girls), to wear during the baptismal ceremony. These robes, suitably weighted at the bottom to prevent their floating on the water, reach well down to the feet; and thus, even when wet, any objectionable display of body or limbs is avoided. It would be well if this custom were followed in all our churches. A deacon or dea-

coness may be made responsible for the care of these robes *ad interim.*

Baptismal Formula

After the candidate is led into the water, the officiating minister usually says, in effect, "Upon profession of your faith in Christ as your Saviour, and in obedience to the divine command to teach and baptize all nations, I baptize you 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' " whereupon he immerses the candidate backward, once.

Chapter VIII.

SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY

There has never been any duly recognized form, or custom, followed by Seventh Day Baptists for the solemnization of matrimony, except to comply with the law of the state in which the ceremony occurs, and to conform, as far as reasonably practicable, to the wishes of the contracting parties. Some ministers have made forms of their own, adapting them to individual conditions. Others use manuals for this purpose, published by other denominations. A fairly acceptable manual of the latter class is that entitled *Wedding Manual—A Pastor's Handbook*. Compiled and edited by Gerard B. F. Hallack, D. D. Published by F. M. Barton, Cleveland, Ohio. Others, published by other publishers, may be found more satisfactory. While this is regarded as a holy solemn service, it is not a sacrament of the church.

Chapter IX.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Like that of the solemnization of matrimony, the custom of Seventh Day Baptists in the service for the burial of the dead has never been uniform. Those in charge of such services have adapted themselves to individual conditions, as they have found them. The more recent tendency has been to simplify this service, however; and here, again, some ministers use manuals published by other churches.

The following named manual is commended to the attention of Seventh Day Baptist ministers: *The Burial of the Dead.* By Duffield. Published by Funk and Wagnalls, New York City.

Chapter X.

CONSTITUTION

The following is a form for a church constitution. It is similar to the constitutions of most Seventh Day Baptist churches, but the constitutions of no two churches are alike in every respect; and this, if followed, should be modified to suit the needs of each congregation using it.

Article 1. *Name*

The corporate name of this church shall be the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J.

Article 2. Membership

Any person may become a member of the church by a majority vote of the existing members, after giving evidence of regeneration and faith in Christ, and being immersed in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and observing the Sabbath of the Lord which is the seventh day of the week, and no person shall be hastily received into the church to the grief of any member thereof.

Article 3. *Government*

The government of this church shall be vested in the members, ten (or any other number desired) of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article 4. *Officers*

The officers of the church shall consist of a pastor, two or more deacons, one or more deaconesses (when

deemed best), a president, clerk, treasurer, auditor, three trustees, and such other officers as may be thought necessary by the church.

Article 5. *Election of Officers*

Sec. 1. The *pastor, elders, deacons,* and *deaconesses* (if any), shall be elected thereafter at such times and in such manner as the church may direct.

Sec. 2. Trustees. The first trustees shall be elected for terms of one, two, and three years, one trustee for each of these respective terms; and their successors shall each be elected for a term of three years, so that one trustee shall be elected each year at the annual business meeting of the church. Vacancies occurring by death or otherwise shall be filled at the first regular church meeting, or at such time as the church may direct.

Voters for Trustees. The members of this church of full age, and every other person of full age who during the preceding year has been a regular paying subscriber for the support of the church, shall be voters for, and eligible to, the office of trustee.

Sec. 3. *Other Officers.* The other officers shall be elected by the church at the annual meeting or at such time and in such manner as the church may direct, and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected. All officers except those mentioned in Section 1 of this Article, shall take office on January 1st, after the annual meeting.

Sec. 4. Unless otherwise ordered by the church, all elections shall be by ballot, and a majority of the qualified voters present shall be necessary to make a choice.

Article 6. *Duties of Officers and of the Church Advisory Board*

Sec. 1. Pastor, deacons, deaconesses, and Advisory Board. A pastor, by the election of the church, sus-

tains a relation to it indicated by such New Testament titles as preacher, teacher, bishop (or overseer), elder, minister, shepherd; and it shall be his duty to have general supervision of all the spiritual interests of the church. As a spiritual leader he shall be at the service of the whole community.

The deacons shall arrange for, and assist in, administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; they shall minister as may be found necessary to the sick and needy in the community; and shall otherwise aid the pastor in maintaining the appointments and sustaining the work of the church.

The deaconesses shall assist in looking after the poor and sick, and coöperate with the pastor, elders, and deacons, especially where woman's ministrations are most fitting and most needed.

The pastor, deacons, and deaconesses shall constitute the Church Advisory Board of which the pastor shall be president *ex-officio*. Applications for baptism and church-membership shall come before this board, first, and then before the church as a whole. As occasion may require, this board shall be a pulpit supply committee. In general, it shall take the lead in all efforts that are calculated to promote the purity, unity, strength, and usefulness of the church.

The pastor or any three members may call a meeting of the board, and five (or any other number desired) members shall constitute a quorum. The board shall make quarterly and annual reports to the church.

Sec. 2. Duties of the Trustees. The trustees shall organize by electing their own chairman and secretary whose duties shall be the same as those of such officers in similar bodies.

They shall hold in trust all property belonging to the church, transact its legal business subject to the direction of the church, and its financial business when

so instructed by the church, and shall report to the church quarterly. A majority of the trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 3. The duties of the president, vice-president, and clerk shall be the same as those of such officers in similar bodies.

Sec. 4. The treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the church and shall pay them out only by vote of the church.

Sec. 5. The auditor shall audit the quarterly and annual reports of the treasurer, comparing them with the books and vouchers and the budget and other approved appropriations. He shall not be a trustee.

Article 7. Duties of Members

It shall be the duty of members of this church to bear equally, according to their ability, the necessary expenses of the church, also to attend when practicable, all the meetings, and especially the Sabbath meetings, of its appointment, with punctuality, and diligently to attend meetings for the transaction of business.

Article 8. *Meetings*

The church shall hold quarterly business meetings on the second First-day of the week in March, June, September, and December, at which meetings the pastor, advisory board, clerk, treasurer, auditor, and trustees shall report. The annual meeting for the election of officers, the hearing of their reports (the reports for the fourth quarter being merged in the annual report) and the transaction of other business shall be held on the second First-day of the week in December each year at two o'clock in the afternoon, unless otherwise ordered by vote of the church, and the fiscal year shall begin on the first day of December. Said meetings shall be duly announced in the Sabbath morning

service two consecutive Sabbaths immediately preceding. Other business meetings may be called by the president of the church on request of the trustees, or the advisory board, or five church members.

Article 9. *Communion Service*

Communion service shall be held quarterly on the Sabbath immediately preceding the quarterly and annual business meetings, unless otherwise ordered by the church. Covenant meetings shall be held the day preceding the communion service.

Article 10. *Amendments*

This constitution may be amended at any quarterly meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members present, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous quarterly meeting, and provided that two notices shall have been given of such proposed amendment in connection with the regular notice of the meeting.

Chapter XI.

RULES FOR THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

NOT A COMPLETE TREATISE

In this brief digest it is not the purpose to go into the minute details of rules for the transaction of business in churches, but to give briefly and in simple language those needed in an ordinary business meeting. Anyone desiring a more extensive treatise is referred to manuals on parliamentary practice, such as the following: William E. Barton, *Rules of Order for Eccelesiastical Assemblies,* 1910; and *The Law of Congregational Usage,* 1915. Theodore G. Soares, *A Baptist Manual,* 1911, quoted largely from Barton's earlier work. Barton's books are the best published for churches with a congregational form of government, such as that of Baptists, and of Seventh Day Baptists; and all pastors are urged to study them. A brief, simple code of parliamentary law is to be found in *Robert's Rules of Order,** or *Cushing's Manual;* these are primarily intended for secular assemblies.

A CODE OF RULES NEEDED

It is agreed that the business of a church should be transacted in an orderly manner; and that,

*Robert's Rules of Order, Revised for Deliberative Assemblies, 1912. Published by Scott, Forseman & Co., Chicago and New York.

while protecting the rights of the minority, it should voice the mind of the majority. To accomplish this end in deliberative assemblies, a code of rules has long been in existence, modified with the changing customs of the centuries. In condensed form, this code will be found in either of the manuals named in the preceding paragraph.

MAY MAKE ITS OWN CODE

Any church has the right to make its own code of rules for the transaction of its business as well as for its conduct in all matters; but in the absence of such a code it is incumbent upon the church to follow the rules that have come to be generally accepted for such purposes. In this connection, it is well to remember that the rules followed in well conducted churches vary slightly from those used in other organizations. Or, to state it in the language of another: "It needs to be recognized that religious bodies have been building up for themselves a body of precedents that have come to the status of standing laws for their own government."—BARTON.

RULES OF ORDER SHOULD NOT BE UNREASONABLY PRESSED

In the transaction of church business, rules of order should not be unreasonably pressed; they should not be insisted upon to the embarrassment of those not familiar with rules and forms. Barton well says, "Parliamentary law is not a

series of arbitrary rules imposed upon assemblies by the mandate of an external authority, but is the mere application of common sense, experience, and courtesy to the requirements of deliberative assemblies. Rules change, but these three abide, and by these all rules stand or fall and the greatest of these is courtesy."

THE PURPOSE OF RULES

It should be kept in mind that the purpose of parliamentary rules is not to tie the hands of the assembly (the church), or to give one person or class of persons any advantage over any other; but to aid the church to expedite its business, and to give all an equal opportunity for a full share in its transaction.

ORGANIZING A MEETING

Ordinarily a church meeting has its officers appointed before it assembles. Sometimes this is not true, or the presiding officer may not be present. In such cases, when the members have assembled, the clerk or the next officer in rank, calls the meeting to order, asks that a presiding officer *pro tempore* be elected, and presides till this is accomplished. If all the officers are absent or none have been elected, some one especially interested calls the meeting to order, states the situation, asks that a chairman be elected, and presides till this is done. The chairman then sees that a clerk and such other officers as are needed are chosen.

The laws of some states make the pastor the legal chairman of all meetings of the church unless someone else is elected by the church. Most pastors prefer that someone else preside except when business is transacted at a religious service. In any case, *care should be taken to comply with the laws of the state in transacting the business of the church.*

THE VOTE, HOW TAKEN, WHEN CARRIED, MAKING UNANIMOUS

When a meeting is ready to vote on a question, there are three ways, aside from balloting, by which the vote may be taken: It may be taken *viva voce* ("by the living voice"), as when the chairman asks those in favour of the question to say "Aye," and after this is done, asks those opposed to say "No," and finally announces the result by saying, "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost," as the case may be.

Or the vote may be taken by the "show of hands," as when the chairman asks those in favour of the motion to manifest it by the uplifted hand, and when he has counted the hands raised for the affirmative, asks those opposed to manifest it by the uplifted hand, announcing the motion as carried or lost according to the vote.

Or the vote may be taken by the "rising vote," as when the chairman asks those in favour to rise, and follows this expression by the request

that those opposed arise, declaring the motion carried or lost according to the vote.

Voting by the "show of hands" is more often used than the other forms in the meetings of a church, and the "rising vote" is seldom resorted to except when the chairman is in doubt as to the result and asks for the "rising vote" that he may count the number voting on each side the more accurately, or when it is asked for to make the vote the more expressive. These three forms, to distinguish them from balloting, are spoken of as voting by acclamation.

A fourth form of voting is by the "written ballot," and is much used in elections. When this method is resorted to, convenient ballots should be provided and tellers appointed to pass and collect the ballots and assist the clerk in counting them when collected. The ballots all being in and counted, the presiding officer calls upon the clerk to read the result. When electing officers or committees by ballot, there may be nominations or there may not be. Often an "informal ballot" is taken to determine whom the members have in mind for a given office. Because one has not been nominated does not prevent ballots being cast for one.

In the regular election of officers, the usual rule is that they be elected by ballot. It is customary, however, when the members have only one candidate in mind to avoid the formality of a ballot by voting "that the clerk cast the unani-

mous ballot in favour of" the candidate named, whereupon the clerk prepares and casts one ballot for the candidate. The chairman now declares the candidate elected. This custom should be used cautiously.

There may be more than one nomination when electing by acclamation, in which case the vote is taken on the names in the order in which the nominations were made. If the first nominee receives a majority of the votes, he is declared elected, and there is no occasion for voting on the other nominations; but if he fails to receive a majority,—*i. e.,* more votes against than for him, —the other names are voted on in order till one does receive a majority.

In case of election by acclamation a ballot may be called for by any member and, usually, the request should not be denied.

It often happens after the vote is taken that the church wishes to make the vote unanimous. All have expressed themselves in the vote, the wish of the majority has been clearly expressed, and the minority now desire to make the action unanimous. This can be done by some one in the minority moving to make the vote unanimous. One vote against this motion defeats it; and, furthermore, if the minority simply let such a vote pass by neglecting to vote, it can not be said to be unanimous.

A majority vote carries any ordinary motion unless there is some rule previously adopted to

the contrary. A special rule, however, naming certain motions requiring more than a majority for their passage is seldom adopted by a church except in regard to amendments to its constitution.

What is known as voting by "Yeas and Nays" in the parliamentary procedure of legislative assemblies, political conventions, and some other deliberative bodies, though legal in churches, has no practical place in the transaction of their business.

The result of the vote, by whatsoever form taken, should be announced by the presiding officer as soon as it is known. Until the result of the vote is announced, any member may change his vote if he so desires. If the presiding officer permits debate or remarks on the question between taking the vote and announcing its result, the vote should be taken again.

QUORUM

Churches usually fix the number necessary to constitute a quorum. A quorum having been present at the opening of the meeting, it is supposed to continue to be present until adjournment, unless some one raises the question of a quorum; and in the absence of such question the business transacted is legal, though the meeting has been reduced to less than a quorum.

A meeting called to order at the appointed time may proceed without a quorum provided

members arriving later complete the quorum and approve the business already transacted.

OFFICERS

Moderator

The presiding officer of a church is called president, chairman, or moderator. The principal duty of a moderator is to call the meeting to order, ascertain the presence of a quorum, announce the business before the meeting, preserve order, put motions, declare their result, decide questions of order, and obey the command of the church.

The moderator does not lose his vote by virtue of his office, but he does not usually exercise that right except when there is a tie or when the vote is by ballot. He may participate in the discussion of any question, in which case he should call someone else to the chair temporarily. After he has taken part in the discussion, he should resume the chair. The chairman of a meeting should not be vacillating in his decisions. Better make a wrong decision than not any, or than to be wavering and hesitating. A wrong decision, if sincere, will generally be kindly received by the assembly; and it is far better than to have business drag because the presiding officer is vacillating.

Clerk

The clerk is an important officer in a church meeting; and while, as a rule, it is better to rotate

(pass around) the offices of a church, for the sake of the records a competent clerk may well be retained in office year after year.

The chief duty of the clerk is to keep the records, including a correct roll of the members, and the record of all motions and resolutions in a suitable book provided for that purpose; a file of all reports and papers, and the preservation of all valuable documents. It is desirable that all reports and other documents be transcribed into the record book of the church. He should also affix his signature to the minutes of all meetings.

The clerk may vote and exercise all the privileges of any member in the meeting.

Other Officers

Besides the moderator and clerk, there are other officers in a well organized church; but these two are all that are necessary for the transactions of a business meeting. The other officers and their duties will be found in the section entitled CONSTITUTION.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS IN A BUSINESS MEETING

The rights of members are equal. Every member, however humble and obscure, has the same right as any other member to introduce business, explain, make recommendations, and participate in discussion. He is entitled to cour-

teous treatment on the part of the other members and the moderator; and it is his privilege to protest when this is not accorded him. It is due the moderator, the members, and the Cause the church represents, that his own conduct and language be orderly, courteous, and Christian.

Every member not only has the privilege of voting, but it is his duty to vote unless a question that pertains to his personal interest solely is before the meeting, in which case he should not only refrain from voting but should ask to be excused and withdraw from the meeting. It is bad form for one to remain in a meeting when a matter of marked personal interest to himself alone is under consideration; but before he withdraws, he may state his position and make such other statements germane to the question as Christian courtesy suggests.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The usual order of business is as follows:

I. Call to order
II. Prayer
III. Reading minutes of last meeting
IV. Reports of officers and committees
V. Unfinished business
VI. New business
VII. Reading and approval of minutes

INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESS

There are four ways in which business may be introduced into a meeting:

(a) By the chairman's calling the regular order of business.

(b) By the presentation of the report of a committee.

(c) By the presentation of a petition or memorial.

(d) By a resolution or motion introduced by some member.

No business, however, is regularly before the meeting until a motion is made, seconded, and stated by the chairman.

It is not permissible, except by indulgence, to discuss a question until it is formally before the house, as described above, although any one having the floor to make a motion may be allowed to explain the purpose of the motion before taking his seat.

The second to a motion is required on the ground that a subject should not be considered unless more than one person so desires. Many times in the disposal of routine business the moderator does not wait for a formal second, but assumes that it has been made, thus saving time by taking it for granted that the meeting wishes to act on the motion.

DISPOSAL OF THE QUESTION

When a motion has been made, seconded, and stated by the chairman, it is said to be before the house, the assembly or meeting, and is henceforth spoken of as the motion, question, or

proposition before the house. There are different ways of disposing of the question.

I. The Main Question

With or without discussion, the meeting may vote on the main question as it is made. This action is final, whether the vote be affirmative or negative, and the meeting passes to other business.

II. Subsidiary Questions

When a question has been regularly brought before the house, the members may not desire to consider the question at that time; or they may not wish to take action on it as presented, in which case other motions, called subsidiary motions, may be made. The principal subsidiary motions are: *(a)* The question of consideration; *(b)* To lay on the table; *(c)* To postpone to a day certain; *(d)* Indefinite postponement; *(e)* To commit; *(f)* To amend; *(g)* Motion to substitute; and *(h)* The previous question.

(a) The Question of Consideration

When a motion is brought before the house, some may not wish to consider it. In such cases a member may arise and, addressing the chair, say, "Mr. Chairman, I rise to the question of consideration," whereupon the chairman says, "The brother raises the question of consideration. As many as are in favour of consideration will say *Aye*. Those opposed will say *No*." The chair-

man then announces the result. If the vote is affirmative, the meeting proceeds to consider the question as introduced; if the result is negative, the matter introduced in the main question remains as if it had not been brought up.

The question of consideration must be raised before there has been any debate or action taken regarding the main question, and must be put without debate or amendment.

(b) To Lay on the Table

This motion has for its purpose the suppression of the consideration of a question during the pleasure of the house, and carries with it all motions pending concerning the main question. When the main question is taken from the table, it is before the house with all its amendments as it was prior to the motion to lay on the table. The motion to lay on the table is not debatable or open to amendment, and takes precedence over all other subsidiary motions save the question of consideration. It yields to privileged and incidental questions.

(c) To Postpone to a Day Certain

When a proposition is brought before a meeting at what seems to be an unfavourable time for its consideration, the motion to postpone to a day certain is helpful. This motion is debatable and may be amended, provided the debate does not involve the merits of the main question. It is in

order when the motion to amend is pending, but does not cut it off, and is equal in rank to, the motion to commit, to postpone indefinitely, and for the previous question.

(d) Indefinite Postponement

The motion to postpone indefinitely is debatable, but may not be amended, and when before the house throws open the whole question. If carried, it kills the main question; if lost, the main question is before the house as if the question to postpone indefinitely had not been made. It ranks with the motions to postpone to a day certain, to commit, and for the previous question.

(e) Motion to Commit

When a meeting finds that a question before the house can best be handled by referring it to a committee, the motion to commit is in order. If there are standing committees, it may be referred to one of them; or a special committee may be appointed. The question to commit may be amended and is debatable, but the merits of the main question are not open for discussion. This motion is not in order when the motion to postpone to a day certain, to postpone indefinitely, or for the previous question is before the house.

The parliamentary procedure in a committee is governed by the parliamentary rules of the church, or body, creating it; but unless the committee is a large one, formalities are not strictly adhered to,

though they should never be disregarded to the injustice of any member.

Unless the house names the chairman, the committee may elect its own chairman, but usually the first one named on a committee is considered its chairman, by virtue of being named first.

A committee may recommend anything regarding the proposition committed to it which seems good and wise; and should, if possible, present a unanimous report.

If a committee can not agree upon the report, there may be both a majority and a minority report. For a member of a committee who does not agree with the majority report to fail to submit a minority report, and then to oppose the majority report when before the assembly may be questionable procedure. When a minority report accompanies the majority report, both may be received, and a motion entertained to consider one or the other as the house may please.

When a church adopts the report of a committee, whatever is recommended therein becomes the action of the church, but the report of a committee when before the house may be accepted, amended, rejected, or recommitted. The report brings before the church the main question with all its privileges.

If the report of a committee or an officer be simply a matter of information, containing no recommendations, a motion to receive and record or place on file is sufficient; but if it contain

recommendations or other matters committing the church, the motion should be to adopt.

(f) Motion to Amend

There may be a desire to modify the motion before the house and it may seem best to do this without referring it to a committee. The motion to amend will serve this purpose. A question before the house may be amended (1) by inserting words, (2) by striking out words, or, (3) by striking out certain words and inserting others. The motion to amend is debatable and may be amended.

If the main question under consideration contain several items, they may be considered item by item, in their order, or out of their order; or they may be voted on as a whole without discussion of separate items. When considered item by item, and all have been considered, it is customary to adopt them as a whole as amended, if amended.

When a question is laid on the table, or postponed to a day certain with an amendment pending, the amendment goes with it and is before the house when the main question is considered again.

(g) The Previous Question

The "Previous Question" is a technical term for a motion to close debate and obtain immediate action on the question before the house. It is seldom resorted to in transacting the business of religious bodies, but has been useful in the pro-

cedure of large deliberative bodies. It has changed both as to form and use with the passing years; but, in this connection, we are concerned with the present usage only. Its real purpose is to bring useless debate to a close. When the question before the house has been thoroughly considered and there is a manifest disposition to continue the debate to no good purpose, the previous question may be moved. The form of procedure is as follows: Mr. "A" rises and says, "Mr. Moderator, I move the previous question." The presiding officer now says, "Mr. 'A' demands the previous question. As many as are in favour of ordering the previous question will say 'Aye'; as many as are opposed will say 'No.'" This question is not debatable and can not be amended. The results of the motion are as follows: If determined in the negative, the consideration goes on as if the motion had never been made; if decided in the affirmative, then the presiding officer at once, without debate, proceeds to put, first, the amendments pending, and then the main question as amended. If an adjournment is had after the previous question is ordered, the subject comes up the first thing after reading the Minutes the next session, and the previous question still operates, making the main question operative over all other business, whether new or unfinished.

The previous question is of equal rank with the motion to postpone to a day certain, to postpone

indefinitely, and to commit. It can not be moved while either of the others is pending.

In small assemblies there is but little use for the previous question; and the prejudice is so strong against shutting off debate that it is often rather a dangerous motion to make, and should be made only after the assembly has plainly exhausted the subject. (See Reed's *Parliamentary Rules,* § § 125, 126, 127.)

(h) Motion to Substitute

The motion to substitute is often used, and is a form of the motion to amend. It is serviceable when the proposition under consideration needs extensive revision. The form of the motion is to strike out all except the enacting clause and to substitute that which is desired. It has all the privileges of the motion to amend.

III. Privileged Questions

The nature of privileged questions is indicated by the name; they are those which arise out of the needs of an assembly, and from their nature are granted special privileges or rank. They have precedence over the main question and all subsidiary questions. Under this head it will be sufficient to mention the following:

(a) Adjournment

The motion to adjourn supersedes all other questions, provided it includes nothing but mere

adjournment only. If this motion is carried, the meeting does not assemble again unless there is a regular appointment; if lost, the business proceeds as before the motion was made. The motion to adjourn can not be repeated till some business has intervened. Fewer than a quorum may adjourn to some future day, or without providing for another assembling of the meeting. The motion to adjourn may not be amended, nor is it debatable unless it contains matter other than mere simple adjournment, in which case it is both debatable and may be amended. On occasion, the presiding officer may permit both debate and amendment when the simple motion to adjourn is pending provided no other business is before the meeting. The object of this rule is to prevent precipitating an adjournment before the business of the meeting is completed. If an assembly has not already fixed the time of the next meeting, a motion fixing such time takes precedence over any motion pending, including the motion to adjourn itself.

(b) To Take a Recess

Occasionally a church meeting, an association, or other religious body, desires to take a recess in order that a committee may prepare a report, or for some other reason. Under these circumstances a motion to take a recess until a stated time is in order. It is not considered debatable, though remarks are sometimes allowed by gen-

eral consent. An amendment fixing the time at which it is proposed to reässemble may be entertained.

(c) Questions Involving Rights of Members and the House

A member who feels that his rights have been trampled upon by the house, or that he has been misunderstood or falsely accused, may rise to a question of privilege, state his grievance, and ask for a decision. The chairman may decide the question or he may call upon the house to decide it. The one raising the question of privilege may appeal from the decision of the chairman; the chairman must then put the motion, "Shall the decision of the chairman stand as the decision of the church."

Questions involving the rights, dignity, and safety of the church itself may present themselves. When this situation appears, a member may rise to a question of privilege, state the case and ask for a decision. The chairman may decide the question or place it before the house for decision.

Questions involving the rights and privileges of members and of the house are seldom raised in religious assemblies, but it should be borne in mind by both members and chairman that they are lawful questions. They are sometimes called questions of privilege to distinguish them from other privileged questions. They take precedence over other privileged questions.

IV. Incidental Questions

Besides subsidiary motions and privileged questions, there is another class of questions which may be considered while the main question is pending. These are called Incidental Questions, because they are incident to other questions and may take precedence over them. The principal incidental questions are questions of order, reading of papers, withdrawal of motions, suspension of a rule, and the orders of the day.

(a) Question of Order

The Question of Order is seldom needed in the transaction of the business of a church or religious body. When a member feels that the business is not being transacted in accord with the rules and with propriety, he may rise to a Point of Order; whereupon he is asked to state his point. The presiding officer then rules upon the point of order, and if the ruling is not satisfactory, any member may appeal from his decision to the house, in which case the question put by the chairman is, "Shall the decision of the chairman be the decision of the house?" If the point of order is sustained, the business is changed to conform to the ruling; otherwise business proceeds as before. The question may be debated.

(b) The Reading of Papers

When final action is to be taken on a motion, report, or paper, and a member desires to have it

read for information, it is his privilege to make such a request and it is the duty of the chairman to order it read. A member may also ask for information regarding a motion pending.

(c) Withdrawal of a Motion

After a motion has been introduced the wisdom of adopting it may be so much in doubt that the mover desires to withdraw it. This may be done by unanimous consent. If there is opposition to its withdrawal, it may be done by majority vote. The question should be put without debate or amendment. The effect of withdrawal is to leave the proposition as if no motion had been made regarding it.

(d) Suspension of a Rule

By unanimous consent a rule may be suspended. To determine whether there is unanimous consent, it may be necessary to put the question to vote. *The rule providing for suspension of a rule does not justify the suspension of a constitutional requirement.*

Reconsideration

Sometimes a business meeting passes a measure which it wishes to change afterward. This may be done by use of the motion to reconsider. The motion to reconsider can be made and seconded only by those who voted *for* the question when passed; it must be made during the session at

which the proposition was passed; it is debatable, provided the original motion was debatable; and no motion excepting those pertaining to adjournment is in order while it is pending.

If the motion to reconsider prevails, its effect is to bring the original proposition before the house as it was before it passed. When it is before the house, it has all the privileges and limitations which it had when first introduced.

Motion to Rescind

Another measure sometimes used in the business of religious bodies is the motion to rescind. Unlike the motion to reconsider, the motion to rescind can be made at any time when no other business is before the assembly. It is subject to amendment and debate, and opens the main question for discussion.

Other Motions

There are other motions that might be made in a business meeting, but the ones explained in this chapter are the ones in most common use; and include all that need to arise in the transaction of any business—all that will ever likely arise, unless a wilful effort is made to complicate procedure. These rules are adapted to the use of Sabbath Schools, Christian Endeavour Societies, Associations, the General Conference, and other deliberative assemblies, as well as to that of the church; and, furthermore, let it always be remem-

bered that parliamentary rules are not an end in themselves, that they exist to facilitate business, protect the rights of the minority, give expression to the mind of the majority, and always to be administered impartially and with Christian courtesy.

Chapter XII.

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

TWO ORDERS

In Seventh Day Baptist churches there are two orders pertaining to the ministry of the church; viz., pastors and deacons. Evangelists, many missionaries, and others belong to the same order as the pastor, and all are often referred to as a body known as the "Christian ministry" or the "ministry."

MINISTRY

Of the two orders, the ministry, from the teaching of the New Testament and its place in the church is considered by far the more important; and it is with the pastoral office that we are chiefly concerned in this connection, though the other forms of ministerial service are very important.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CALL TO THE MINISTRY?

Many, particularly young people, struggle over the question as to whether they are called to the Christian ministry. They have won the victory over self and come where they are willing to devote their lives to the ministry if the Master wants their service there; but they are in doubt about what God wants, about what constitutes a call to the ministry. How can they find an answer

to this problem? There are at least six things that may point the way.

ADVICE OF FRIENDS

1. The attention of many has been called to the work of the Christian ministry by their friends, who have either directly advised them to take up the work or have expressed the hope that they would do so. The advice of trusted and wise friends who are devout disciples of Christ is to be taken into account. Those who are not disciples are not competent to advise in such matters. But the advice of friends is not conclusive. The late Dr. Lewis A. Platts, when a young man, went to one of our leading teachers with this problem and was advised not to enter the ministry, and was told that he would not succeed if he did. But what a misfortune to our common cause it would have been had he followed this advice! Dwight L. Moody forced his way into the Christian ministry against the advice of friends. Notwithstanding cases like these, one will not lightly put aside the counsel of devout Christian friends, whether it be for or against his entering the ministry; for God may be using these human instrumentalities to point the true way.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

2. The voice of the church may be the voice of God to the soul in this matter. God often speaks through the church; this was particularly

true during the early history of our churches in this country. This however, like the advice of friends, is not absolutely dependable; for sometimes the church is so worldly and its leaders so Pharisaical that God can not speak through it; but if the church is urging one to enter the ministry, one should hesitate a long time before refusing. As recorded in Acts xiii: 1, 2, God used the church to express His will concerning the sending out of Paul and Barnabas, and He has often done this in all ages of the church.

PERSONAL FITNESS

3. One's fitness for the work is to be taken into account. It will go without question that one who is sub-normal mentally, is never called of God to the Christian ministry. But who is to decide who is mentally normal? Some, who, in youth, have been supposed to be inferior in this respect, have subsequently proved themselves above the average, and sometimes have become geniuses and great benefactors.

If one finds his natural gifts tending toward the ministry, and if he possesses scholarly inclinations, a good voice for public speaking, ease in meeting people and in appearing in public, staunchness in defence of the truth, love for men and love for his work, happy is he if God calls him to the ministry. But this is not an infallible test, because God has in every generation passed many by who seemed to have gifts and called

many who were lacking in both natural fitness and inclination. Elder William Satterlee, who was so prominent in building up our churches in Rensselaer County, New York, had a stammering tongue and was much averse to entering the ministry; but God gave him no rest till he did so, and he became one of our most successful ministers of his generation.

PERSONAL INCLINATION

4. If one finds his tastes drawing him to the ministry, he may take it as an indication, not a proof, that he is called of God to that work. But look for a moment at what the work of the ministry is,—that toward which one's liking draws him when it inclines him to the ministry. This is one of the first considerations in answering whether he is called to the ministry and one that must not for one moment be lost sight of. There is limitless opportunity in the ministry for developing scholarship, but making scholars is not the real work of the ministry; there is boundless opportunity for producing literature and enjoying that of others, but to revel in literature or to write essays, however finished and elegant, is not the primary work of the Christian ministry; the minister is constantly thrust into public view, but to make one's self conspicuous is not the work of the ministry; the minister is called to leadership, but being merely a leader is not the work of the minister. All these things enter into the work of

the ministry, but they are only incidental to it.

What then is the heart of the work of the Christian ministry? What does Christ say? "For the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost." It is to save men from sin and lives of sin and help them conquer evil. Paul sets forth the same thought when he says, "If by any means I might save some." Unless one has, as a deep and abiding conviction, the desire to save men from their sins,—which means to start them on the Christian life and aid them to conquer themselves,—he has no true place in the ministry. He may be a good man, endowed with a high order of intellect, brilliant, and of high attainments of scholarship, but until love for men and a supreme desire to save them from the degradation, sorrow, pain, and ruin of sin seizes him, he should not enter the ministry. To do otherwise is to invite disaster, to submit one's self and the church to humiliation, and to have to accept the reward of "a hireling whose own the sheep are not," and his reward is that of a hireling.

If one finds his tastes drawing him to this work, together with these other things as incidentals in it, happy is he if God calls him. One's likes and dislikes, however, are not an infallible proof that the work of the ministry is that which the Master would have him do. We are constantly asked to do things we do not enjoy doing. God often passes by those who wish to enter the ministry and calls those who prefer something else. The

question is far greater than one of likes and dislikes, though these may have some bearing on the subject.

NEED FOR WORKERS

5. The need for workers may be another signboard pointing the way into the ministry. This has been the compelling thing which the Holy Spirit has used to lead many a disciple to give his life to the ministry. The whitened fields may be God's call to the ministry as is the need of soldiers to defend one's country a call to the colours. The need for men in the ministry has in all ages been very great and never greater than today. If it appears to one that he can be of more service to humanity in the ministry than elsewhere, it is evidence that he should put his life there. One is never justified in preaching one year or even one hour unless the compelling reason is his sense of the great need; he who preaches for selfish reasons must be regarded as is a hireling.

VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

6. These things, the advice of Christian friends, the voice of the church, one's natural tastes and gifts, and the world's great need, may help in settling the question of whether one should enter the ministry, but none of them, nor all of them, is final. The great thing, the final thing, is God Himself impressing the call on the soul of man till he feels compelled to yield and

enter the ministry. The Spirit of God may, and generally does, use some of these things to impress His will upon one, but never until the Spirit impresses one into the ministry, is he called of God.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit ever overrides man's intellectual faculties in calling him to the Christian ministry. He uses them; He uses them to make known His will. He usually appeals to man's reason as to entering the ministry, by means of friends, the church, man's natural gifts, and especially by means of the needs of the hour; but He has in certain cases risen above all these, unless it be the needs of the hour, and impressed upon certain ones the conviction that they should enter the ministry. God does not see as man sees; He knows what man is capable of better than anyone else; He knows whom He can use in the ministry in any generation; He can use, and must have, a variety of workers and He knows who they are. In view of these considerations it involves one of the loftiest functions of the intellectual faculties to perceive and follow the impress of God's will upon the soul. Many have felt this call of God and have been unable to state definitely why they are called, except that the harvest was great and the labourers few; and these, though not able in their own finite judgments to see why they were called to such a great work, have gone forward

trusting God, knowing that some day they would know why God called them.

To recapitulate: The call to the ministry is the impress of God on one's soul that one should enter upon that work. This impress may come through the influence and advice of devout friends, through the church, through one's natural gifts, and through the whitened fields, or it may come in some other way, since the Holy Spirit is not limited to any means or method of communication. Let no man dare enter the ministry until he feels impelled by the Holy Spirit of God; and when God calls, let no man dare refuse under any condition. He who refuses does so at his own peril; for, by thus doing, he turns his back on God.

DOORS CLOSED

7. Suppose that one is impressed that he ought to enter the ministry, but that all churches and all other doors are closed to his ministerial services. This may well be accepted as conclusive evidence, either that he is mistaken as to his call, which is possible, or that there is no place in the ministry for him owing to the attitude of the churches and the hardness of men's hearts. What is he to do in such a case? He has offered himself for work, and by so doing he has done his duty; and may, with a clear conscience, turn to something else, lovingly leaving the responsibility with others. The disciples or the church that

leads one into the ministry or turns one away from it, is assuming a great responsibility, and neither should be done without the most earnest prayer and careful consideration. Without in any sense minimizing the importance of the other forms of ministerial service, we must repeat that it is with pastoral work that we are chiefly concerned.

THE WORK OF THE PASTOR

The pastor's chief work is to preach the Gospel with the avowed purpose of leading men to begin the Christian life and of nurturing the disciples. The pulpit is his throne. He is called to be a prophet of the Most High. As a priest it is his function to administer the sacraments of the church, comfort the sorrowing, minister to the sick and dying, and to be a true and faithful shepherd to his flock at all times and under all circumstances. As an executive it is his to direct, in an advisory way, the affairs of the church. In short, the pastor is prophet, priest, and executive.

The pastor is called to a particular pastorate by the vote of the church; but he should first be called of God to the Christian ministry, as it is from God that he receives his authority and not from man. He is not to be an autocrat over the church, but is to be as one of his flock, and to set a worthy example in coöperating in carrying out the expressed will of the majority, as well, in all matters. A pastor's term of office may terminate either at his request or that of the church.

COURTESY TO THE PASTOR

Care should be exercised that due courtesy to the pastor and his sacred office is shown at all times. On the occasion of public or semi-public funerals and weddings, especially, the pastor should not be ignored. Some other minister may be invited to take the principal part on such occasions, but the pastor ought not to be forgotten. If a wedding or funeral is strictly private, some other minister may be asked to take the entire service, if it is so desired.

DEACONS: HOW CHOSEN, THEIR WORK

Deacons are chosen by the church, and in most churches for life or so long as they remain members of the church, though there is much in favour of a custom sometimes found in Baptist churches of electing deacons for a stated time only.

In the early history of the denomination, as well as in the New Testament churches, deacons filled a more important place in the church than they have in many churches in recent years. It appears that in some churches the deaconate, or diaconate, has degenerated, so far as work is concerned, into nothing more than serving at the Communion table and aiding a little at the time of baptisms. If this is all that is intended, why set men apart to the work of this office with so much ceremony? The ordination service for deacons is similar to that for the pastor in every re-

spect except that the examination is not quite so extensive. Why all this ceremony, if it is expected that the deacon do nothing except assist at the Communion table and when there is baptism? There is more expected, the times require more, and the early church and Seventh Day Baptist churches in former days demanded more. The church during the New Testament period was in a formative state and we cannot claim absolute uniformity in the matter of details, and evidently there was no attempt at such a regime; but it is very conclusive that the deacon was an assistant to the pastor. This has been the custom among Seventh Day Baptist churches. The meaning of the word translated "deacon" is "servant." The pastor in a general way is pastor of the entire church and every branch of its work, and the deacons are to assist the pastor in this work.

(a) The Sacraments

The deacons are to assist the pastor in the administration of the sacraments. There is more to this than the mere mechanical furnishing and setting of the table, passing the emblems and rendering such service at baptism as is needed. They should do these things faithfully and promptly even to the providing of a place for baptism, and they should also see that everything possible is done to make these services orderly, impressive, and spiritually uplifting. Many a Communion Service has been spoiled because of

the haphazard way in which it has been conducted. A mutual understanding between the pastor and deacons will obviate this. It is incumbent upon the pastor to see that this is done; but if he does not, the deacons should insist upon having such an understanding.

(b) Temporal Affairs

As in the church at Jerusalem, it is the deacons' place to assist the pastor in administering the temporal affairs of the church. The pastor in his pastoral work will come in contact with the sick and needy, and deacons are expected to aid him in visiting the sick as well as to administer the benevolences of the church. In many cases they can report to him the sick and needy which have not come under his notice.

If the financial affairs of the church are not looked after by anyone else, it is incumbent upon the deacons to see that some one is appointed to do this work, or to lead in it themselves.

(c) Pastor's Advisers

The deacons are the ones to whom the pastor naturally looks for advice, unless a board or committee is appointed for that specific purpose; and if there is such a committee, the deacons should be members of it, by all means. A wise pastor always looks to his deacons, if they are worthy and men interested in the church. They are his natural advisers, and if he turns to them for coun-

sel, no one can criticise, for has not the church chosen them?

(d) Leaders in Discipline

The deacons are the natural leaders in church discipline, remembering always that discipline has for its object the reclaiming of the wandering. In this matter, as in all others pertaining to the church, other members are not to shoulder this responsibility upon the deacons, but next to the pastor the deacons are to lead out in these matters if no one else will. Frequently it is true that the deacons can take the lead in cases of discipline better than the pastor himself.

(e) Lead in the Absence of a Pastor

In the absence of a pastor the deacons are to lead in all the work of the church and perform many of the duties of a pastor. In this case the visiting of the sick and looking after the needy by the deacons become doubly necessary. Providing leaders for public worship rests upon them unless some one else is appointed for that purpose. If the Spirit lead them to preach, as it did Stephen, they should render this service. The fact that in the absence of the pastor they are the ones to see that the services are maintained with order and regularity does not mean that they are always to lead the meetings; they may secure, as is often done in pastorless churches, others to take their turn in conducting the services, if such a course seem best.

In the absence of the pastor, the deacons should see that the Lord's Supper is celebrated regularly and baptism administered when occasion requires. Some of our early churches formally instructed their deacons to administer the ordinance of baptism and officiate at the Lord's Supper. Every church should have some one in it whose duty and privilege it is to administer the sacraments; if no ordained pastor or elder is present, some one should be appointed to do so, and the deacons are the ones to see that this is done. They should make sure that the church instructs them or some one else to render this service. One of the deacons may take his place at the table and the others pass the emblems, all being understood beforehand. And it may be added that if there are no deacons, others should be instructed to administer the sacraments. Leaders should be appointed in all churches; this has been the practice, spirit, and genius of Seventh Day Baptist churches as well as Baptist churches, and it is needless to say that it should be continued.

(f) Not to Do All the Work, nor Assume a Lordly Spirit or Attitude

While the deacon is the pastor's assistant in every good service which he can render and in the absence of the pastor the leader of the work of the church unless some one else is appointed, he is not expected to do all the work any more than a superintendent is expected to do all the work in

a factory. He is the servant of the church, as the name indicates, and he will serve best by leading others to active service whenever he can. Above all, the spirit of loving, helpful tenderness is to permeate all.

Notwithstanding the fact that so many duties and prerogatives belong to a faithful deacon, he is to guard against a lordly spirit or attitude. To be officious, or to seem to be, mars all. He rules best, as well as serves best, who keeps himself in the background, pushing others ahead whenever he can, and always making Christ and His holy will supreme.

Chapter XIII.

ORDINATION AND DENOMINATIONAL RECOGNITION

FITNESS AND IMPORTANCE OF ORDINATION AND RECOGNITION

When one called of God is fitted for, and is about to enter upon, the exalted duties of the Gospel ministry, it is appropriate and in accord with the best sentiments of all men, as well as with New Testament practice, that he should be consecrated to that work by solemn and well ordered services. The installation services in certain secular organizations are a witness to this fact; in such organizations the sentiment of mankind seems to dictate that when men assume the duties of comparatively unimportant offices, they should be installed with special services. How much more needful, then, that those entering the Gospel ministry should be inducted into the duties of that high calling with suitable services, public and impressive! Such services, however, are sanctioned by the higher authority of the Bible and of the Holy Spirit.

DELIBERATION, WITHOUT UNDUE HASTE

Undue haste should never be permitted in the matter of consecrating a candidate to the Christian ministry. He should have demonstrated to

himself and to the church that he is called of God to the ministry and that he is prepared to meet the duties of that call. This may take months and even years; and, in the meantime, the church of which the candidate is a member, or the one with which he is labouring, may license him temporarily to baptize and officiate at the Communion table. Such a course as this is entirely proper and far better than to ordain a man before he has proved his call by service in the ministry.

It has not been the policy of Seventh Day Baptists to set any bounds as to the amount or length of preparation before ordination; but churches have, as a rule, urged candidates to prepare themselves thoroughly and to take time to demonstrate that they are called of God and prepared for the work.

WHO SHOULD ORDAIN?

It is in accord with New Testament order, and has been in the practice of Seventh Day Baptists, that ordination should originate with the local church, and not with any outside body.

If a man fitted for the work of the ministry is about to go to a field outside the bounds of the church of which he is a member, it is appropriate that the latter church should call him to ordination; however, if preferred, ordination may be delayed till he reaches the church which he is to serve.

A COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SHOULD BE CALLED IF POSSIBLE

In a matter of so great importance as the consecration of a man to the Christian ministry, it is well that the church desiring the ordination of a candidate should call upon sister churches to send delegates to sit in council with it to consider the matter. This, with scarcely an exception, has been the practice of Seventh Day Baptist churches. Churches have sent their candidates to an annual session of an Association or the General Conference with the request that they be ordained by the brethren there assembled. This procedure was common for a time in the middle of the last century, but was soon discouraged.

Churches have sometimes called a council, and, for the convenience of the delegates appointed thereto, asked that the council meet immediately prior to, or during, or following, an Association or other public gathering of the churches; it being understood that ordination, if it takes place under such circumstances, is the act of the church calling the council, and not that of the Association or other public meeting.

If no sister church can send delegates and the demand that the candidate be ordained is imperative, the local church is empowered by the Master to proceed with the ordination without a council. Ordination without a council is to be discouraged, however, unwarranted, or indiscreet, exer-

cise of this right having been productive of regretted results and sharp criticism in the past.

THE PROCEDURE IN ORDINATION

The procedure when a candidate is ready for ordination to the ministry is as follows:

1. *Vote of the Church*

The local church votes to call the candidate to examination, and, if he is found qualified, to ordination; the church also votes to invite churches of like faith in a given section (generally the churches in the Association to which the church calling the council belongs) to send delegates to the council.

For a few years past, a number of our Associations have appointed Ordination Committees; and many times the church, after voting to call the candidate to ordination, has voted to ask the Ordination Committee to call the council, conduct the examination, and ordain the candidate if he is found qualified, all being understood to be done in the name of the church.

The vote of the church to call the candidate is usually about as follows:

Whereas, Brother Herbert Clarke, a member of this church, has given evidence that he is called of God to the Gospel ministry; and,

Whereas, We believe the time has come when he should be in solemn public services formally set apart to that work; therefore be it

RESOLVED: *First,* That we call Brother Herbert Clarke to examination with view to the ministry, and to ordination, provided upon examination it appears the time has come for such action.

Second, That we call a council to consider and pass upon the fitness of Brother Herbert Clarke, said council to meet with us at 10 o'clock A. M., June 30, 1921; and

Third, That we invite sister churches in this Association to send delegates to said council.

The invitations to sister churches to send delegates may be sent out by the clerk, or the church may appoint a special committee to do so; or, if it chooses, it may ask the Ordination Committee to send out the invitations in the name of the church.

2. *Appointment of Delegates*

Upon the receipt of an invitation to appoint delegates, our churches usually appoint the pastor, deacons, deaconesses, and a few lay members. The church calling the council also appoints delegates to sit with the council, and it is fitting that it have a large delegation.

It has been the practice in some churches that the clerks forward to the council a list of delegates appointed by their respective churches. By this practice, the delegates do not appear without their credentials. This is the business-like way to proceed and ought to be practiced by all churches.

3. *Who Calls the Council to Order*

When the council assembles, the meeting is called to order by the pastor of the local church; or by the clerk; or, if the Ordination Committee have charge, by the chairman of that committee. The one who calls the council to order should preside over the council until the action of the church calling the council has been read and a moderator, or chairman, has been elected.

4. *Reading the Call*

Following the call to order, the action of the church in calling the council should be read.

5. *List of Delegates*

After the call has been read, a list of the delegates appointed and present is obtained in some business-like manner.

6. *Election of Moderator and Clerk*

A correct list of the delegates having been obtained, the organization of the council is completed by the election of a moderator and a clerk.

7. *Season of Prayer*

Either at this point, or when the meeting is first called to order, the council should engage in a season of earnest, humble prayer for the guidance of God.

8. *Examination of Candidate*

When the council is organized and ready to proceed with its work, the candidate is called upon to state his Christian experience and call to the ministry, and is examined as to his religious beliefs.

Occasionally it has been the practice for the candidate to read a paper setting forth his beliefs; and, in some cases, his Christian experience has also been included in the written statement. Some, however, feel that it reflects greater credit upon the candidate, upon his training, and upon the Cause if the candidate submits to an open and systematic oral examination by the council. An oral examination is conducted either by the presiding officer or by some one appointed for that purpose. In whatever way the examination is conducted, there should be the utmost freedom in asking questions.

9. *Vote of the Council*

At the close of the examination the candidate should withdraw from the room, and the council should consider, and vote upon, his fitness for ordination. The council may decide that the candidate is not called to the ministry; or it may decide that, though called of God to preach the Gospel, the time has not come when he should be publicly set apart to that work; or it may decide that he is prepared and ready for ordination. The fact that a council has been called and

examination held should not in any way prejudice the council to recommend that the candidate be ordained. For several decades, however, a council has seldom recommended a delay in ordination, and still less seldom has it recommended that the candidate be forbidden to preach.

The usual action is very simple, and is as follows:

RESOLVED, That the examination of Brother Herbert Clarke has been satisfactory and we recommend that he be ordained.

10. *Who Conducts the Ordination Service*

When the action is favourable, it is the custom of the Baptists for the council to turn the ordination exercises over to the local church, in which case the pastor presides and conducts the ordination exercises. Among Seventh Day Baptists, more recently, the moderator of the council has conducted the ordination exercises.

11. *Order of Exercises*

The order of exercises at an ordination service is varied to meet the needs of the occasion, but the usual order is something as follows:

(a) Opening Exercises. (These may be similar to the usual opening exercises of the church service, or they may be much modified.)

(b) Ordination Sermon

(c) Charge to the Candidate

(d) Charge to the Church

(e) Consecrating Prayer

(f) Welcome to the Ministry
(g) Hymn by the Congregation
(h) Benediction by the Candidate

12. *Records and Certificates*

A complete record of the transactions of the council, together with the actions of the church in relation to the ordination should be entered in the regular records of the church. Also the candidate should be given a certificate of ordination, for which the following form may be used:

This Is To Certify, That Brother Herbert Clarke after a satisfactory examination as to his Christian experience, call to the ministry, and religious faith, by a council called by the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Hope Valley, N. J., was consecrated to the Christian ministry at Hope Valley, N. J., on the 21st day of April, 1921.

WILLIAM F. GREENE,
Moderator.
WILLIAM B. MAXSON,
Clerk.

RECOGNITION BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

At the General Conference held at Boulder, Colorado, in 1908, a resolution was adopted which included the statement that "Conference may, upon request of a church, recognize one as a minister in the denomination." If the church calling the council wishes the newly consecrated candidate recognized by the General Conference as an ordained minister, it should pass a resolution to that effect and forward it to the General

Conference; or if a minister wishes to be recognized, he should ask the church ordaining him to forward the request to General Conference.

RECOGNITION OF MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

1. *Procedure Similar to That in Case of Ordination*

The procedure in the recognition of ministers coming from other denominations is much the same as in the case of the ordination of one just entering the ministry; and what has been said regarding that subject applies to this, for the most part.

2. *Become a Member of One of Our Churches*

Before any church asks that a minister from another denomination be recognized, he should become a member of one of our churches. This is self-evidently consistent and has always been the practice of Seventh Day Baptists. Joining one of our churches makes one a member of the denomination and there is no occasion to recognize a minister until he has become a member of the denomination, any more than there is to ordain one to the ministry who is not a member of one of our churches.

3. *Council Called*

It is fitting that a church desiring the recognition of a minister from another denomination should

call a council, that the council should be properly organized, that the candidate should be examined, and that his qualifications should be passed upon by the council the same as in the case of the ordination of a minister. In the examination, especial attention is rightfully given to denominational faith and practice.

4. *Ordination Exercises Not Necessary*

In recognizing a minister from another denomination who has been ordained, it is customary to omit ordination exercises, properly so called; but the candidate may, with great propriety, be given the right hand of fellowship, as a welcome into the Seventh Day Baptist ministry, and this is usually done.

Chapter XIV.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline has for its object the restoration of the erring one, not to punish, much less to slander or place him in an unfavourable light before the church or the world. Every step taken in adjusting differences between church members, and in looking after the wandering, should be such as to show that the church is yearning with a Christ-like love for the wayward ones. Discipline in any other spirit is to be deplored, and is a disgrace to the church. In our church covenants we pledge ourselves to watch over one another in Christian love; and Paul says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

A. PROCEDURE WITH A LAYMAN

Private Offenses

There are two classes of offenses, private and public. Private offenses are those wherein one member has a grievance against another church member. These are to be dealt with according to the teaching of Christ laid down in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. There are three steps that are to be taken if necessary. (1) The one offended is to go to the offender, tell him the

trouble, and seek to come to an understanding and reconciliation. If this is accomplished, no further steps are necessary. (2) If reconciliation can not be brought about by the two alone, then the offended is to take two or three other members with him, go to the brother against whom there is a grievance, and with their help seek reconciliation. (3) If this does not bring about a brotherly relation, the matter is to be taken to the church, and the church is to use every means to bring about a reconciliation between the two. If the church finds that one has wronged the other and is unwilling to acknowledge it and make the wrong right as far as possible, then the offender is a subject for discipline.

Cases may arise where it is wise to call a council of sister churches to assist in settling matters growing out of private offenses.

"It is not to be made public until all these steps (the steps laid down by Christ) have been taken and failed; and to be made public then by telling the church and no others," says Hiscox in his *Baptist Church Polity*. The publication of the faults of a brother is a violation of the spirit and teachings of Christ and is a godless procedure, one which in days past subjected the one guilty of such conduct to the severest discipline; namely, excommunication.

The matter does not rest entirely with the one who is offended; the offender has obligations in the matter. If one has injured another, he is to

seek out the injured brother and endeavour to bring about a reconciliation. See Matt. 5 : 23, 24. The responsibility for restoring right relations rests on both the offended and the offender.

Public Offenses

Public offenses are those which are not against any one in particular, but are a reproach to the church and the Cause of Christ. The more common ones are improper words, indiscreet conduct, immoral life, contention and strife, refusing to pay debts, and disregard of absolute honesty and truthfulness in any of the affairs of life.

In these cases as with private offenses, the one knowing about them is to go to the sinning one, privately, and in tenderness and love try to win him from the error of his ways. He is not to publish the offense, but seek to restore the offender.

If no one pursues this personal course, the matter should be brought to the deacons or to the spiritual advisers of the church, and they should take such action as shall tend to reclaim the wandering one and keep the offense from becoming public. Many a one starting on the downward road can be saved, if, instead of having his sin published and the church withdrawing from him, he is approached in the manner indicated above.

In case all efforts on the part of the individual members and officers fail to reclaim the erring

one, or if his conduct has been a public scandal, the charges should be taken to the church, and in very difficult cases the church may *well seek* the aid of sister churches, asking them to sit in council with it, as in the case of ordination.

It is conceded by all, or nearly all, denominations that the accused, whether minister or layman, has the right to demand that he be presented with a copy of the charges against him, and that the names of the witnesses be given. In fairness, a church will do this without request from the accused.

The Presbyterians, in the discipline laid down for their churches, not only insist that the accused be given a copy of the charges against him containing the names of the witnesses and signed by his accusers, but also that the time and place of the offense be specified therein.

Hiscox in his *Baptist Church Polity* says, "Any member tried by the church has the right to receive copies of all charges against him, the names of his accusers and witnesses, both of whom he shall have the privilege of meeting face to face, hearing their statements, bringing witnesses on his side and answering for himself before the body."

Brotherly Love

All prejudice and revenge should be eliminated before discipline is commenced. Discipline is sometimes started under conditions and pursued

in ways which indicate to the world and all concerned that those pressing the discipline are prompted by revenge or malice and that the object is not to restore the erring and advance the Cause but to satisfy a personal grudge. This is entirely foreign to the spirit of Christ and only harm can come from discipline under such circumstances; it is a reproach to the church greater, if possible, than the supposed crime of the accused. If discipline cannot be undertaken and carried through in the spirit of brotherly love, it had better never be undertaken. (See Gal. 6: 1.) As little as possible should be done to humiliate the accused. The civil law considers one innocent until proved guilty, and the followers of Christ cannot do less without ceasing to be His followers. Every step in discipline should be conducted with the utmost fairness and with a view of finding the truth and restoring the accused, if proved guilty.

B. PROCEDURE WITH A MINISTER

Principle and Procedure the Same as with a Layman

Seventh Day Baptist churches have so seldom had occasion to depose or discipline any of its ministers through its nearly three centuries of history that a recognized form of procedure can hardly be said to have been established. However, we have the Bible and the practice of the regular Baptist denomination, whose interpretation of the Bible regarding church polity is similar

to ours. The discipline of the ministry should not be different from that of other members and should be conducted according to the rules of Christ laid down as recorded in the 18th chapter of Matthew. If it be a case of private offense, the aggrieved one is to go to the minister before he says anything about it to any one else; if thus unable to bring about adjustment, he should secure the help of two or three others; and if he does not succeed then, the matter is to be taken to the church. If it be a public offense—improper words, indiscreet conduct, immoral life, contention and strife, dishonesty and untruthfulness,—the one knowing about the offense is to admonish, even his pastor, and seek a reformation; and if no one else takes it up, the spiritual advisers of the church should do so; they are the natural leaders in all such matters. All that is possible should be done in a quiet way to restore and to prevent a reproach to the minister, the church, and the Cause.

If the charges are a public scandal they should be taken to the church. For the sake of being fair and as a safeguard against encouraging vile, suspicious, and malignant people preferring charges without any basis, the accused minister, like the layman, is entitled to a copy of the charges against him, giving the names of the witnesses, stating the time and place of the offense, and signed by his accusers. If need be, he is also entitled to call in some one or ones to present

his defense. Malice and prejudice are to be ruled out, and the sympathy of Christ installed.

A Council May Be Called

In difficult cases a church may well seek the help of sister churches, asking them to send delegates to sit in council with the church in considering the charges against the minister, or the minister may ask for a council. If a council is asked for, it may be called and organized as in the case of an ordination council.

Possible Findings of Church or Council

The possible findings of a church or council at the close of the trial, or hearing, are many and varied; the following are some of the more prominent ones:

First. The accused may be found innocent. The fact that one has been reported to be guilty of misdemeanor, or that he is accused even by those high in the church, is no more proof today that he is guilty than it was in the days of Christ. If one is proved innocent, everything possible should be done to remove any stain that has been placed upon him or his reputation, and those who have accused him falsely may be placed under discipline.

Second. The accused may be found innocent, but that by his indiscretions he has given ground for suspicion, in which case he should be admonished to cease his indiscretions.

Third. The accused may be found guilty and penitent, in which case he should be forgiven and restored. It is generally agreed, however, that in cases of gross immorality the guilty party should be put on probation for a time, at least, that he may demonstrate his sincere penitence.

Fourth. The accused may be found guilty but impenitent, in which case every effort should be made to bring him to penitence; but if he remain impenitent and the offense is one worthy of a trial in the first place, the church cannot well do less than ask the offender to terminate his official duties; and if the offense be a grievous one, it may be best for the church to drop his name from the roll, giving him a written statement why such action is taken.

Guarding the Accused's Reputation

While safeguarding the reputation of the church, great care should be taken on the part of the church and all its members that no unnecessary stigma be placed on the accused. The following statement is found in both the *Congregational Manual of Rules and Order,* by Barton; and *A Baptist Manual,* by Soares:

"A man's reputation as a present or former member of a church is a very sacred thing; and the courts will not lightly regard any attempt to defame or persecute an excommunicated member though he is guilty. In general the principle is that the right of a church to discipline its members holds only within the sphere of his church membership. If a church has withdrawn

fellowship from a member, it should not publish the fact to his harm unless it is impelled to do so for its own protection, or for the protection of sister churches. It has an inherent right to purge its own roll from unworthy members, to free its good name from the dishonour of their scandals and to protect other churches from dishonour. But it has no right to libel him, even with the truth.

" 'A libel is a malicious defamation expressed either by writing, or printing, or by signs, pictures, effigies or the like, tending to blacken the memory of one who is dead, or to impeach his honesty, integrity, virtue or reputation, or publish the natural or alleged defects of one who is alive, and thereby expose him to public hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obliquy; or to cause him to be shunned or avoided, or to injure him in his office, business or occupation.' "—*Quoted by these writers from the "Encyclopedia of Law."*

Restoration

The disciplining of a minister, as of a layman, looks towards restoration.

The first step in the restoration of a deposed minister is to lead him back into fellowship with his Saviour and God; this is not only the first but the most important step.

When it is evident to the church that the deposed one has been brought back into fellowship with the Father, he should make application for church fellowship if he has been excluded. He should first seek to be restored into the fellowship of the church from which he was excluded; or this church should at least give its approval to his reception into some other church. This is the

method always pursued in the case of private members where churches sincerely try to be fair with each other; it gives the one who is restored a clean record, and shows courtesy to the church that has disciplined him. To ignore the church that has excommunicated the candidate for restoration is to question the justice of its discipline, if not to condemn it for what it has done.

If, after being restored to church membership, it is thought wise that the deposed one be restored to the ministry, steps to that end should originate with the church desiring his restoration and a council should be called as in case of ordination. The question before the council in such cases is the wisdom of restoring the brother to the ministry. A second ordination is not necessary.

If in any case it should be found that one has been wrongfully condemned, every effort should be made on the part of the church, not alone to restore the condemned one to his former place in the church, but to make right in every way possible the injury thus done, as far as possible. If he has been wrongfully condemned by a council, the council should be recalled or a new one called to rescind the former action; if he has been wrongfully condemned by a vote of the church, the church should acknowledge its mistake and make any restoration in its power to make.

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